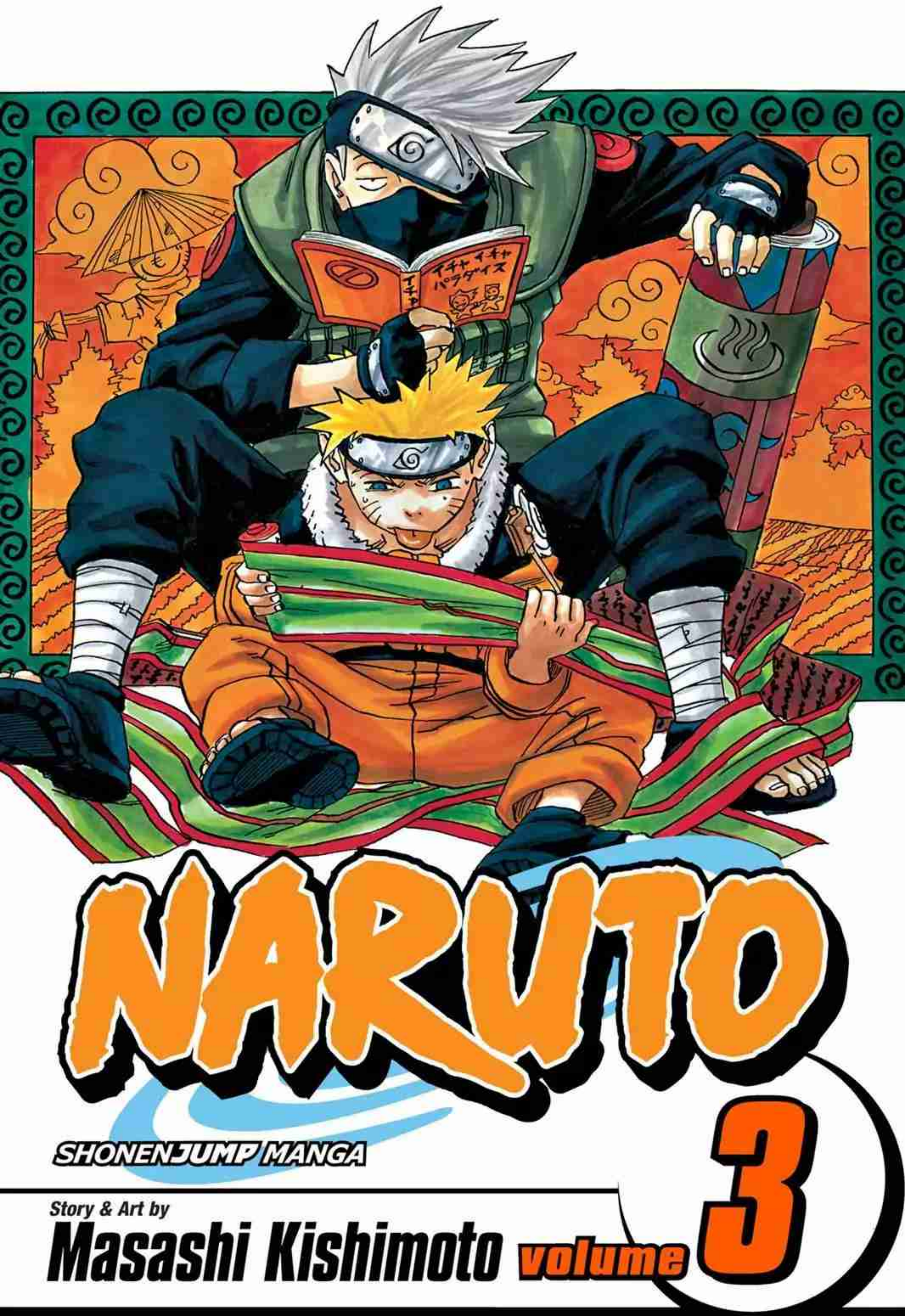
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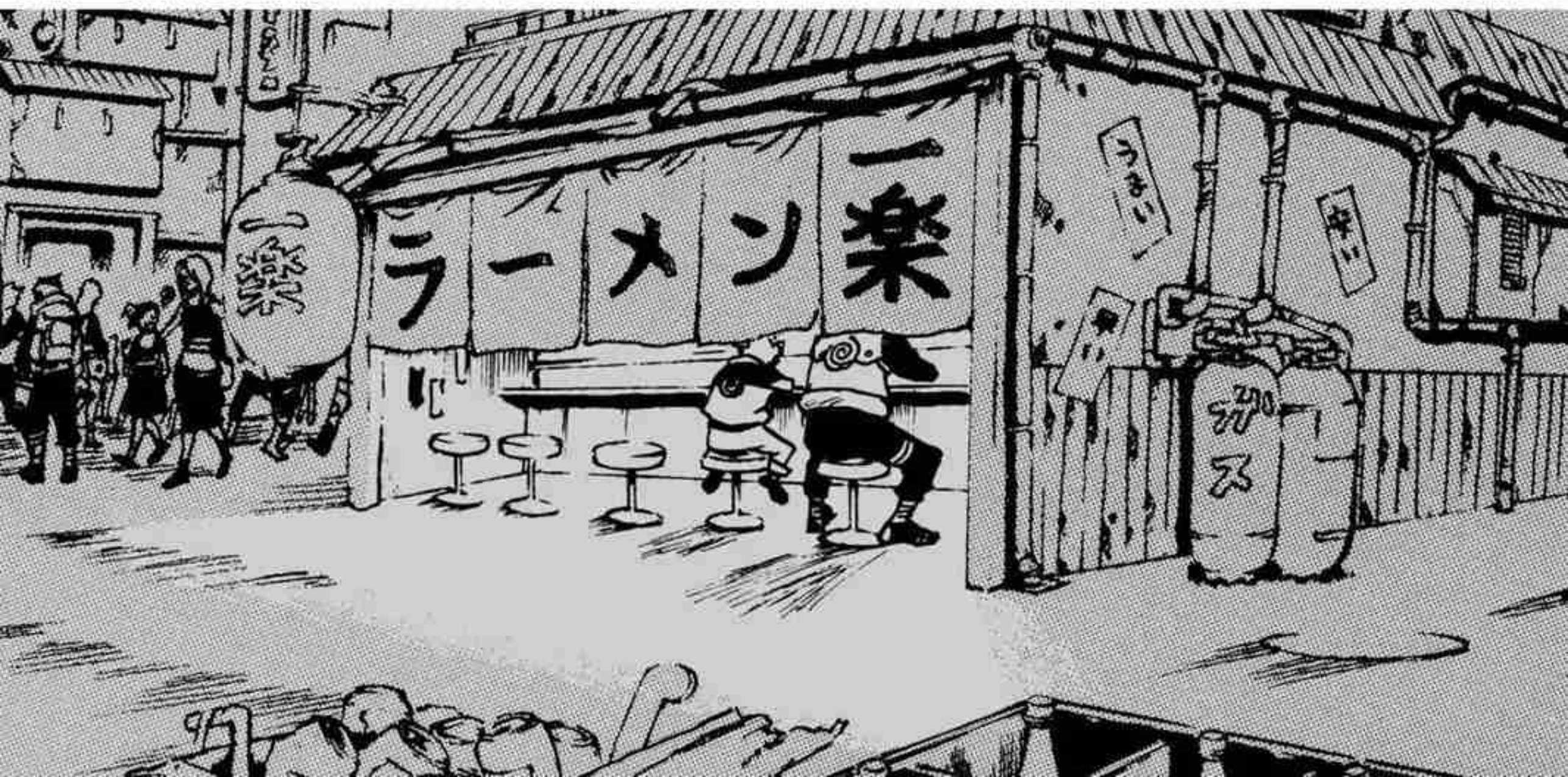
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 3

We're in the third volume of **Naruto**. I feel like I've developed a lot working on this title, but I still have a long way to go. My heart and body are still weak! I must devote a mountain of training to my work on **Naruto**! I want everyone to join me and share in the excitement of **Naruto**!

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2000*

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** ("mechanism"). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.



NARUTO VOL. 3
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in **SHONEN JUMP** #11-14.

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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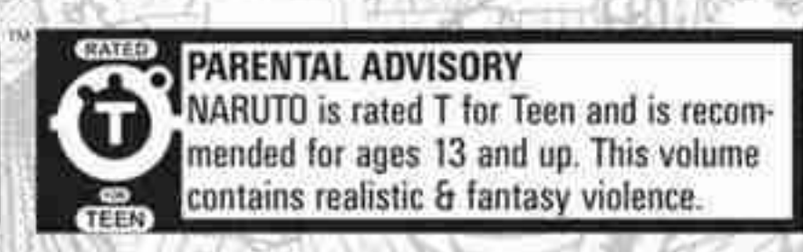

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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

NARUTO™

VOL. 3

BRIDGE OF COURAGE

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

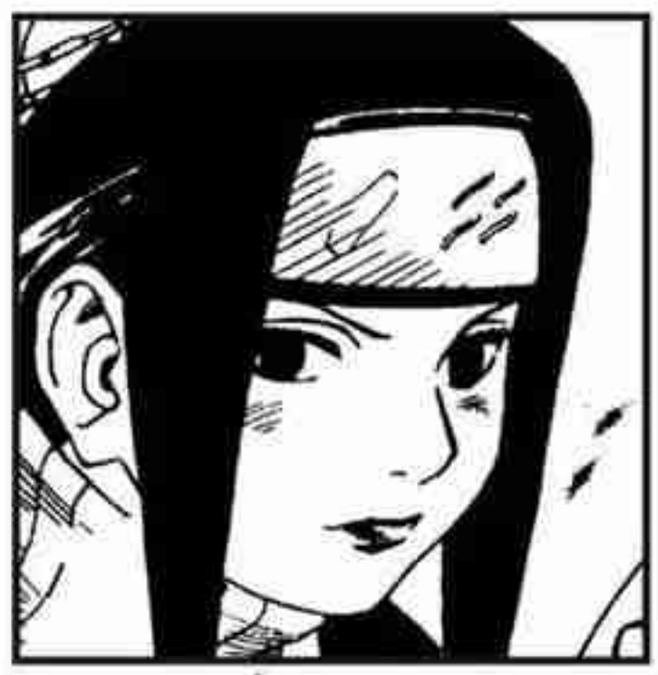
SAKURA サクラ
Naruto and Sasuke's classmate. She has a crush on Sasuke, who ignores her. In return, she picks on Naruto, who has a crush on *her*.

NARUTO ナルト
When Naruto was an infant, he was used as a living sacrifice in a magic rite: a demonic fox spirit was sealed inside his body to keep it from wreaking havoc in the outside world. The orphan Naruto grew up to be an attention-seeking troublemaker. Despite the evil spirit inside him, he just wants to be the best ninja ever, and become the *Hokage*, the village champion.

SASUKE サスケ
The top student in Naruto's class, and a member of the prestigious Uchiha clan. His goal is to get revenge against a mysterious person who wronged him in the past.

KAKASHI カカシ
An upper-level ninja. His *sharingan* eye can deflect and duplicate enemy *ninjutsu*. Currently injured from his fight with Zabuza.

ZABUZA 再不斬
A sword-wielding assassin-ninja known as "the demon." Currently injured from his fight with Kakashi.



HAKU 白
Zabuza's consort, an agile young ninja of indeterminate gender.

TAZUNA タズナ
A grumpy old bridge-builder. He has a daughter, Tsunami, and a grandson, Inari.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Naruto, Sasuke and Sakura are a team of apprentice ninjas from the ninja village of Konohagakure. On their first big mission, they (and their trainer Kakashi) found themselves bodyguarding the bridgebuilder Tazuna on his way back home to the Land of the Waves. But Tazuna hadn't revealed that he was the target of professional hitmen, hired by the evil millionaire Gatô to keep him from finishing his bridge! In a desperate fight, the four ninja were able to defeat the assassin Zabuza—but a mysterious masked ninja stole Zabuza's body before the heroes realized he wasn't dead. Now, assassins and bodyguards are both preparing for a rematch…

NARUTO

VOL. 3
BRIDGE OF COURAGE

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Number 18: Training Day

CLIMB TREES --?!!

THAT'S RIGHT...

LISTEN UP, YOU THREE.

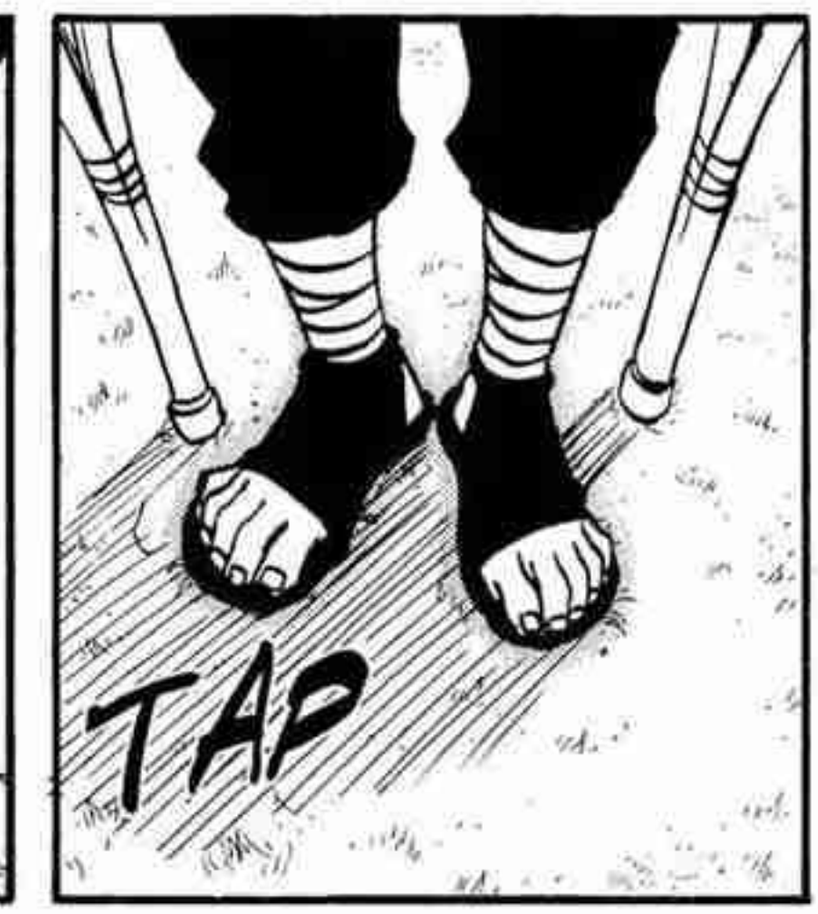
HOW WOULD THAT QUALIFY AS TRAINING?

WHAT A WASTE OF TIME--!

? HOW... ?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN--!
!

YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO USE YOUR HANDS.
THIS WON'T BE ANY ORDINARY TREE CLIMBING.

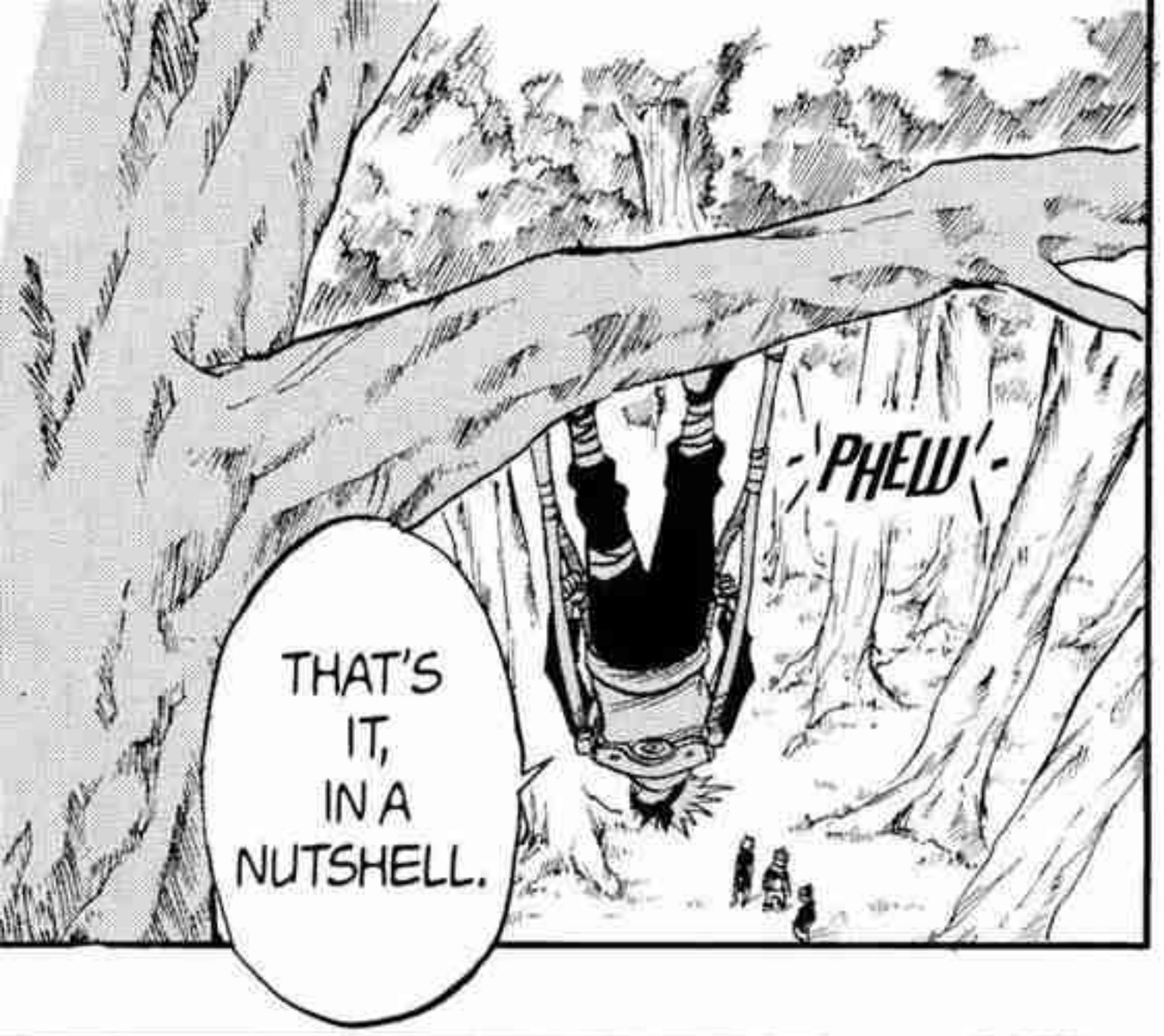
TOK!

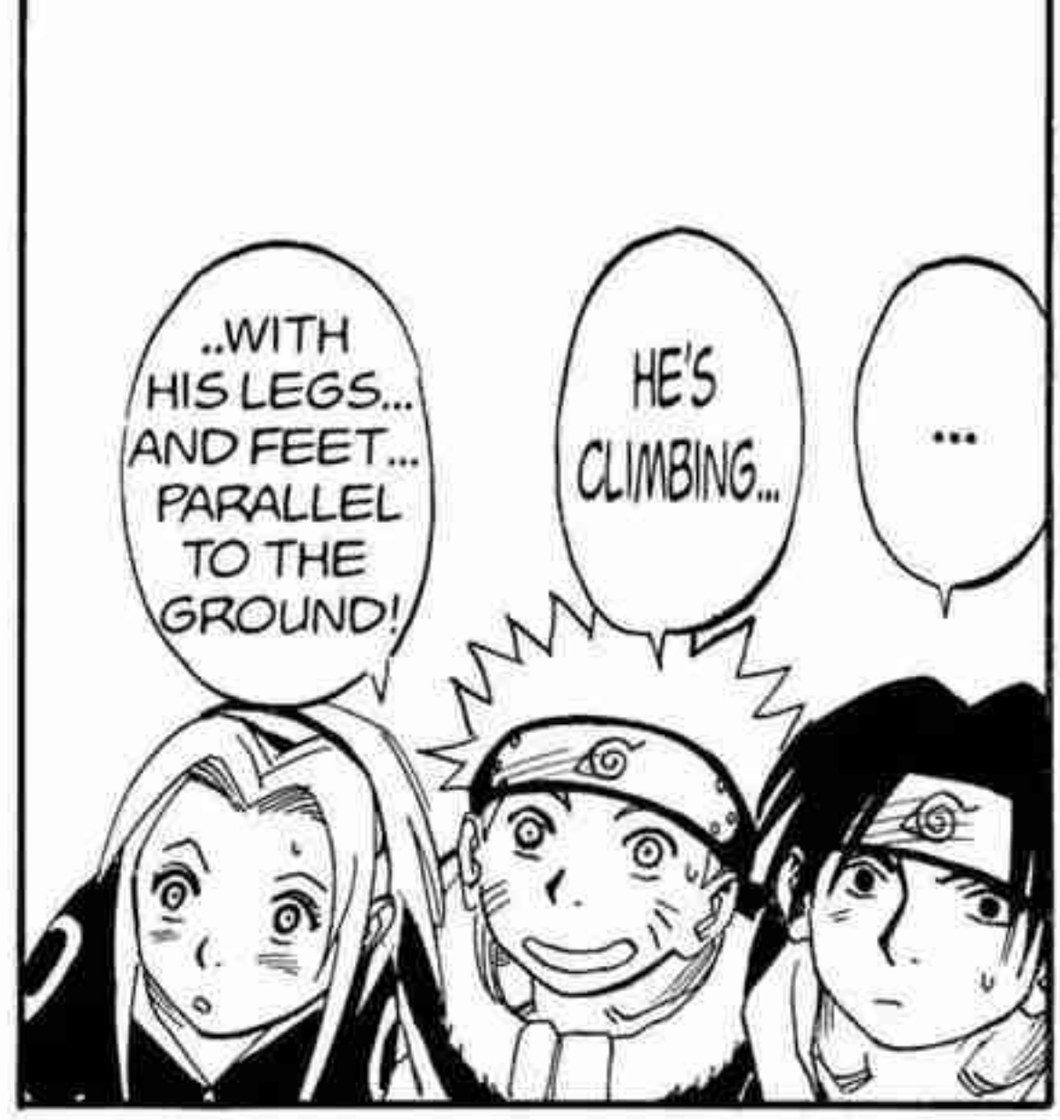

TAP

WATCH AND LEARN.
CLAP

!!
TOK
TOK

!


-'PHEW'-
THAT'S IT, IN A NUTSHELL.


..WITH HIS LEGS... AND FEET... PARALLEL TO THE GROUND!
HE'S CLIMBING...
...

WHEN YOU HAVE FULL MASTERY OVER YOUR OWN CHAKRAS, THIS IS THE KIND OF THING YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH.
FOCUS ALL OF THE ENERGY OF YOUR CHAKRA TOWARD THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET AND USE THAT POWER TO CLING TO THE TRUNK.

THE POINT OF IT ALL, THE GOAL...

LISTEN AND LEARN.
I'M JUST GETTING TO THAT.

BUT... MASTER KAKASHI... HOW WILL LEARNING TO CLIMB TREES THIS WAY MAKE US ANY STRONGER?

THAT SUBTLE CONTROL, IS THE MOST CRITICAL ASPECT OF EVERY *JUTSU* AND TECHNIQUE YOU'LL EVER APPLY.

...TO USE NO MORE THAN IS NECESSARY... BUT TO MAXIMIZE ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN WHERE AND HOW IT IS APPLIED.

...IS GREATER MASTERY OVER THE CHAKRAS.

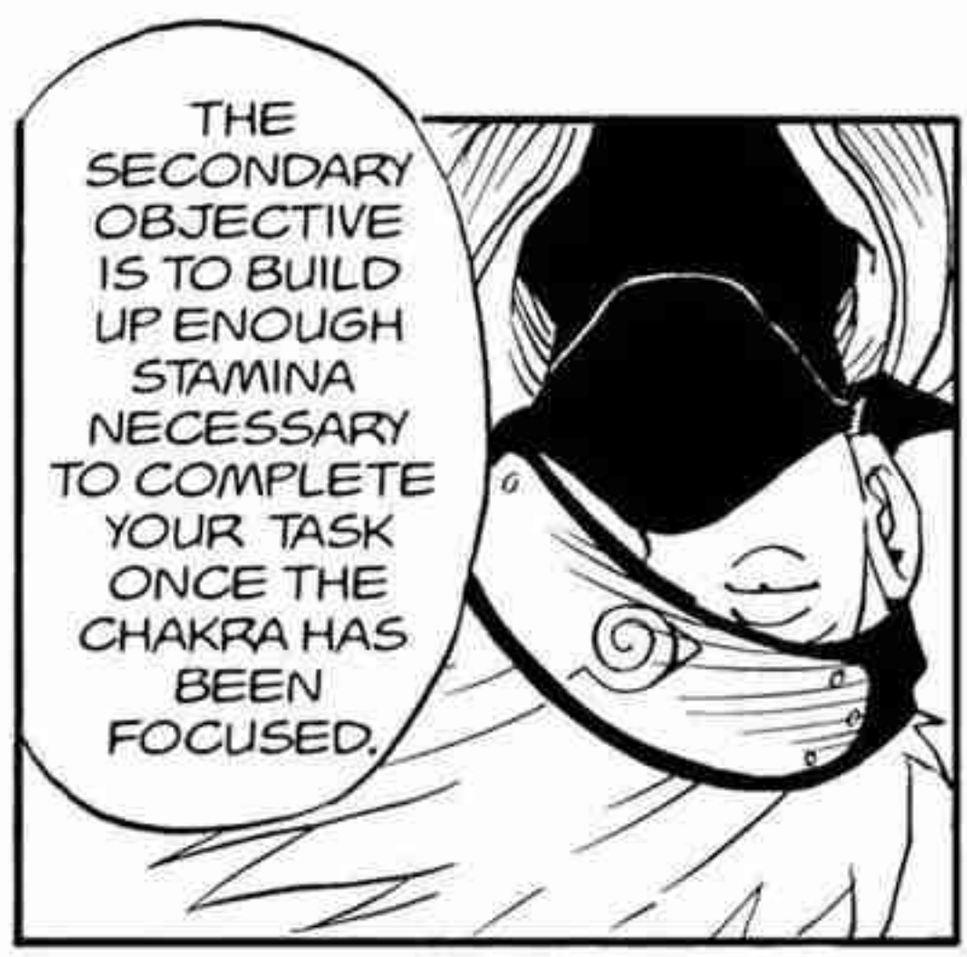
MENTAL ENERGY + PHYSICAL ENERGY

ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOT IS AN AREA WHERE IT IS MOST DIFFICULT TO MANIPULATE ONE'S ENERGIES.

THE TYPE OF TREE-CLIMBING WE ARE DOING HERE REQUIRES THE MOST FINE AND DELICATE APPLICATION OF CHAKRA ENERGY IMAGINABLE.

IT'S ALSO THE MOST DIFFICULT SKILL FOR EVEN A MASTER NINJA TO COMMAND.

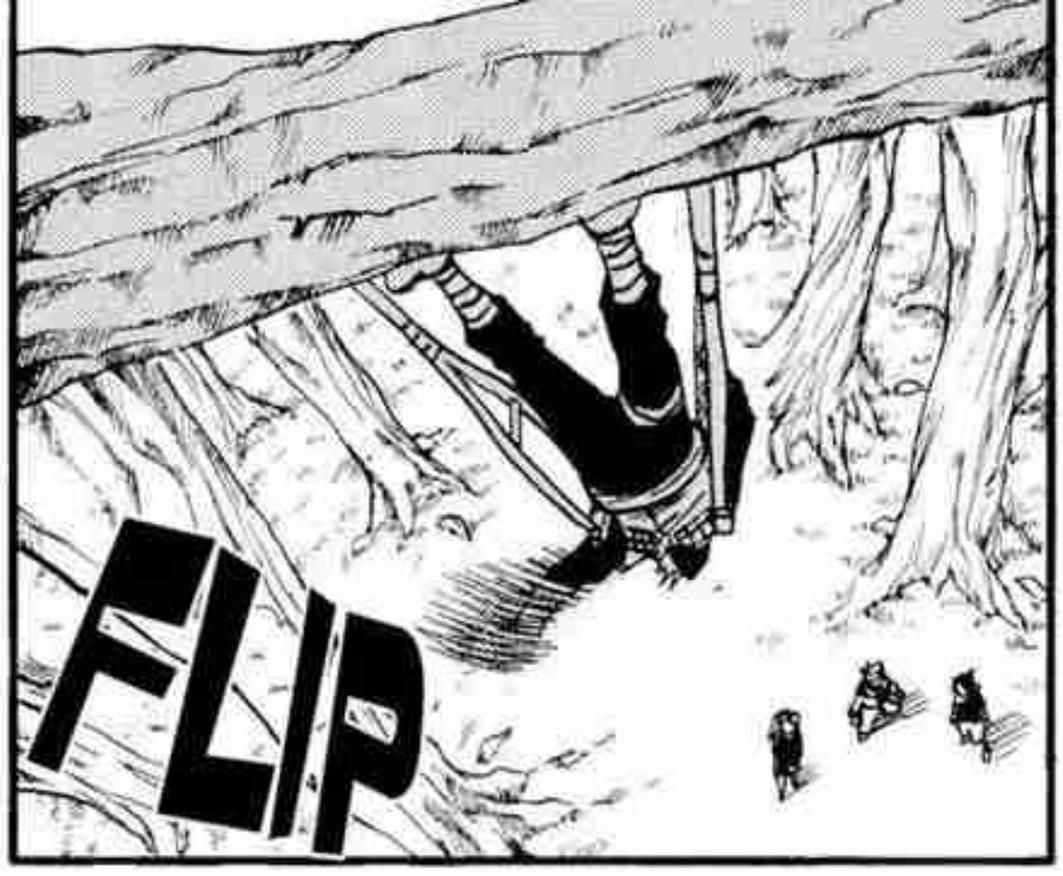
...TO MAINTAIN YOUR CHAKRA WHEN USING NINJUTSU.
IF YOU THINK THIS LOOKS HARD, IT'S EVEN MORE DIFFICULT...

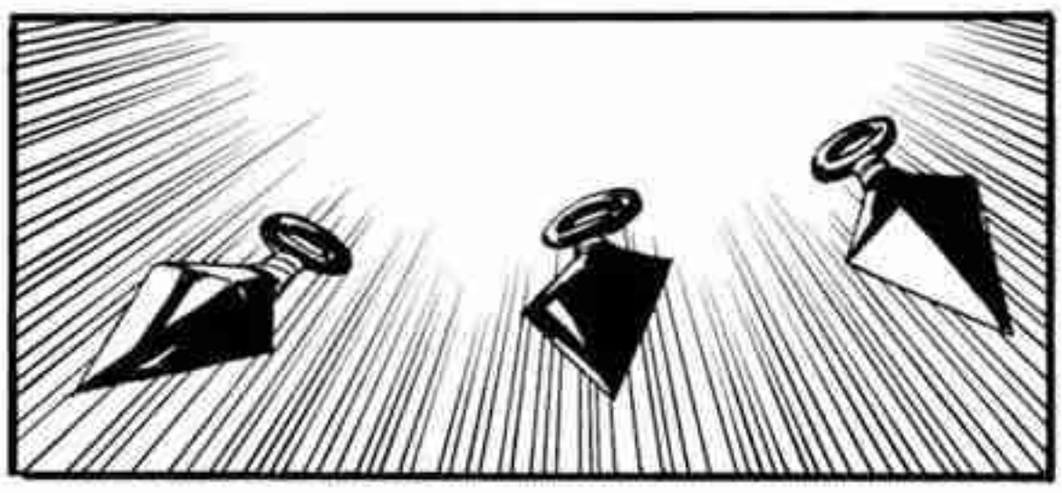

THE SECONDARY OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD UP ENOUGH STAMINA NECESSARY TO COMPLETE YOUR TASK ONCE THE CHAKRA HAS BEEN FOCUSED.

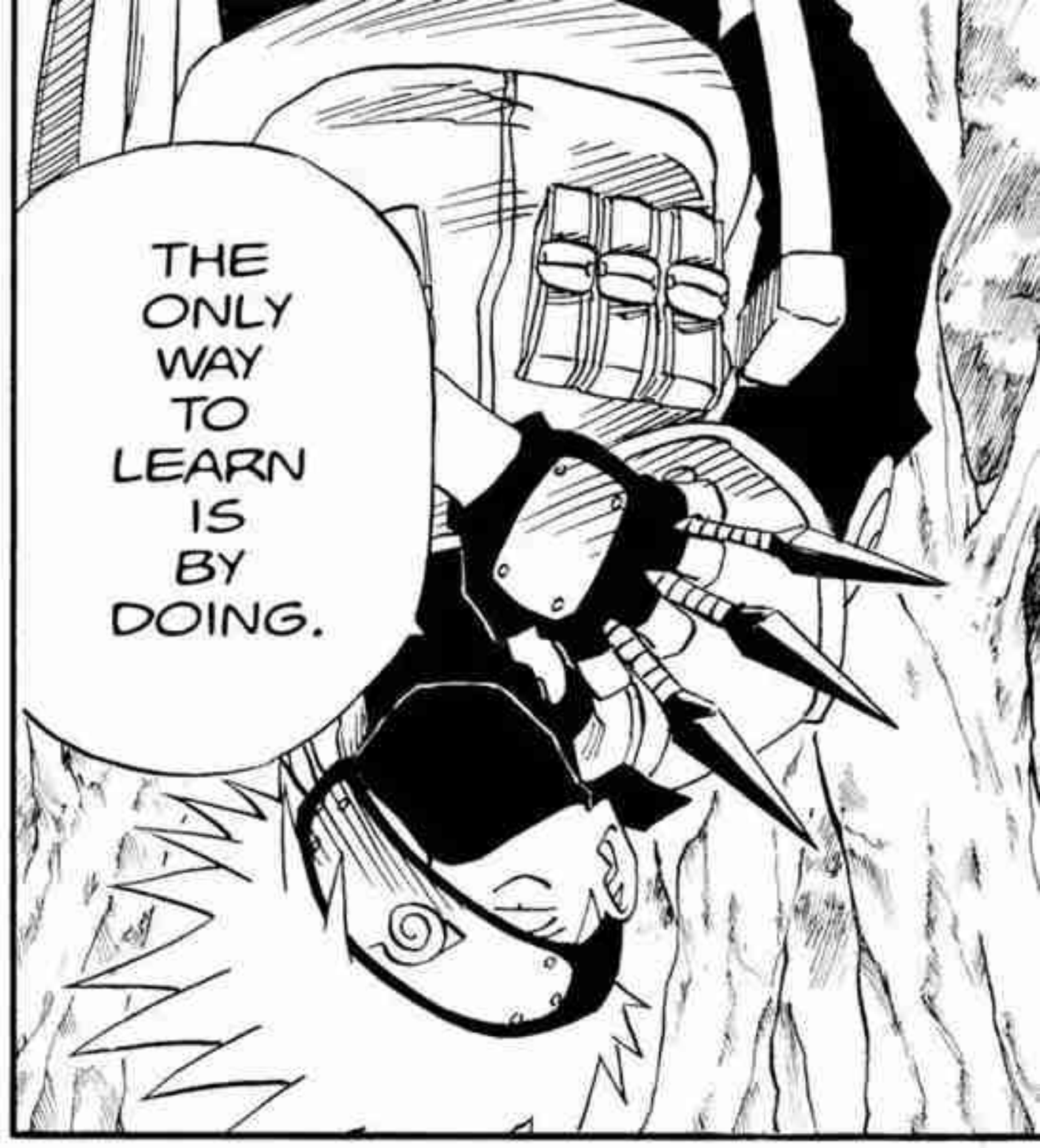
THE TIME YOU NEED TO JUST STAND AROUND TRYING TO SUMMON AND CONTROL YOUR OWN POWERS IS A LUXURY YOU WON'T HAVE.
IN BATTLE, CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING, AND A TRUE SHINOBI HAS TO BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE AND MAINTAIN HIS CHAKRAS ON THE FLY, IF HE EVER HOPES TO PREVAIL.

FWUP
...NOW, NO MORE TALK. IT'S TIME FOR ACTION.

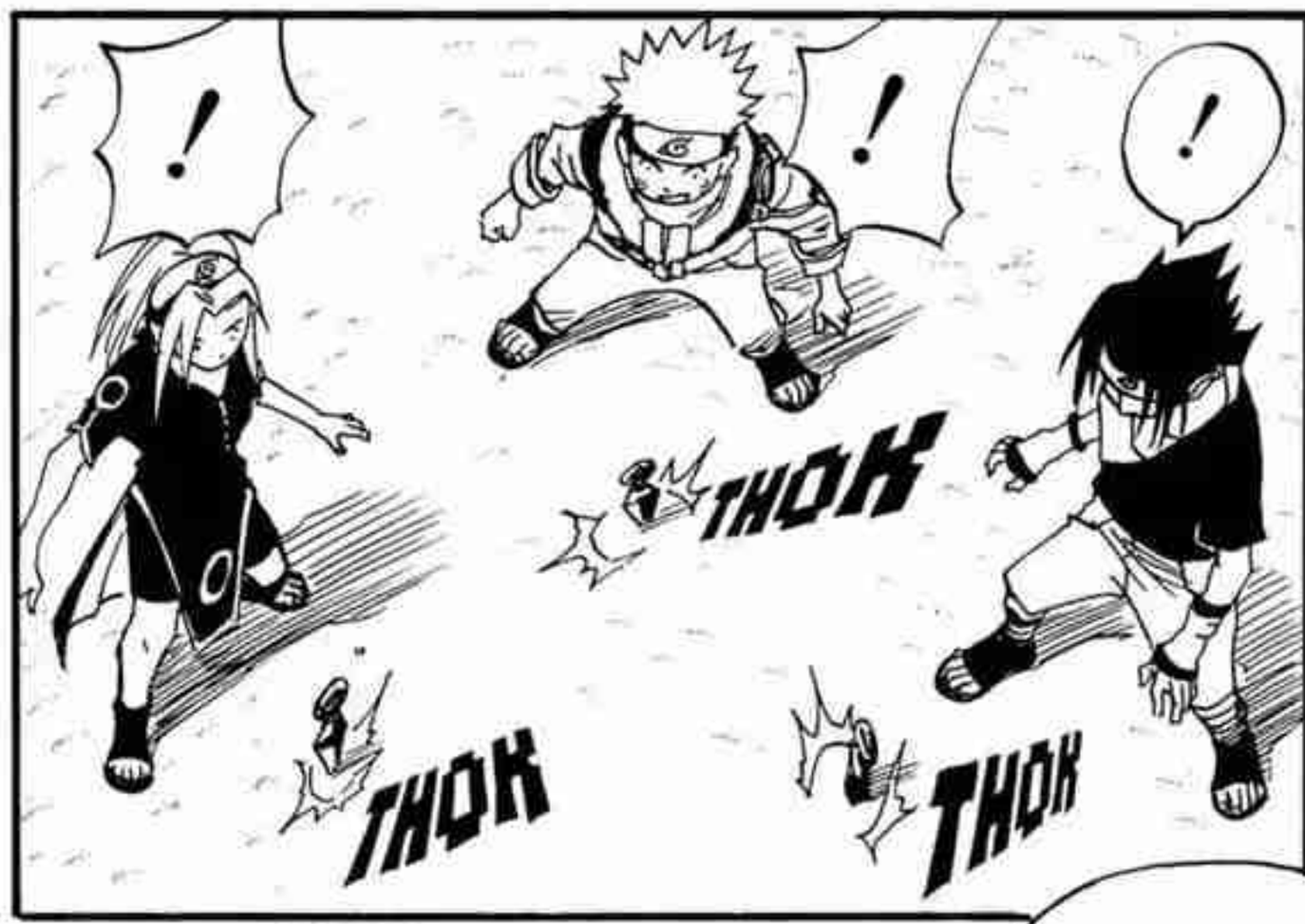
...YOU'LL ALSO BE MASTERING SKILLS THAT WILL PROBABLY SAVE YOUR LIVES.
SO WHILE YOU'RE CLIMBING THOSE TREES...


FLIP




THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN IS BY DOING.

USE THE *KUNAI* BLADES TO SCORE THE BARK AT THE HIGHEST POINT YOU CAN CLIMB TO. IT WILL SERVE AS A REMINDER FOR LATER.


!
!
!
THOK
THOK
THOK

A RUNNING START WILL PROBABLY GIVE ENOUGH MOMENTUM FOR A GOOD FIRST EFFORT. ALL RIGHT?
I DON'T EXPECT ANY OF YOU TO REACH THE TREETOP ON YOUR FIRST TRY.

YOUR GOAL IS TO MAKE A MARK ON A HIGHER SPOT EACH TIME YOU CLIMB.

READ THIS WAY
I COULD DO THIS ONE BEFORE BREAKFAST!
NO SWEAT!!
SMAT
FOCUS MY CHAKRA IN MY FEET...
RIGHT-
LESS TALK AND MORE ACTION.
CHOOSE YOUR TREES AND UP YOU GO!
I'M THE FASTEST-DEVELOPING NINJA ON THIS TEAM!
...
READY OR NOT, HERE I COME!!
OOOOOHMM
THOMP
TAK TAK TAK
MMMMMMM

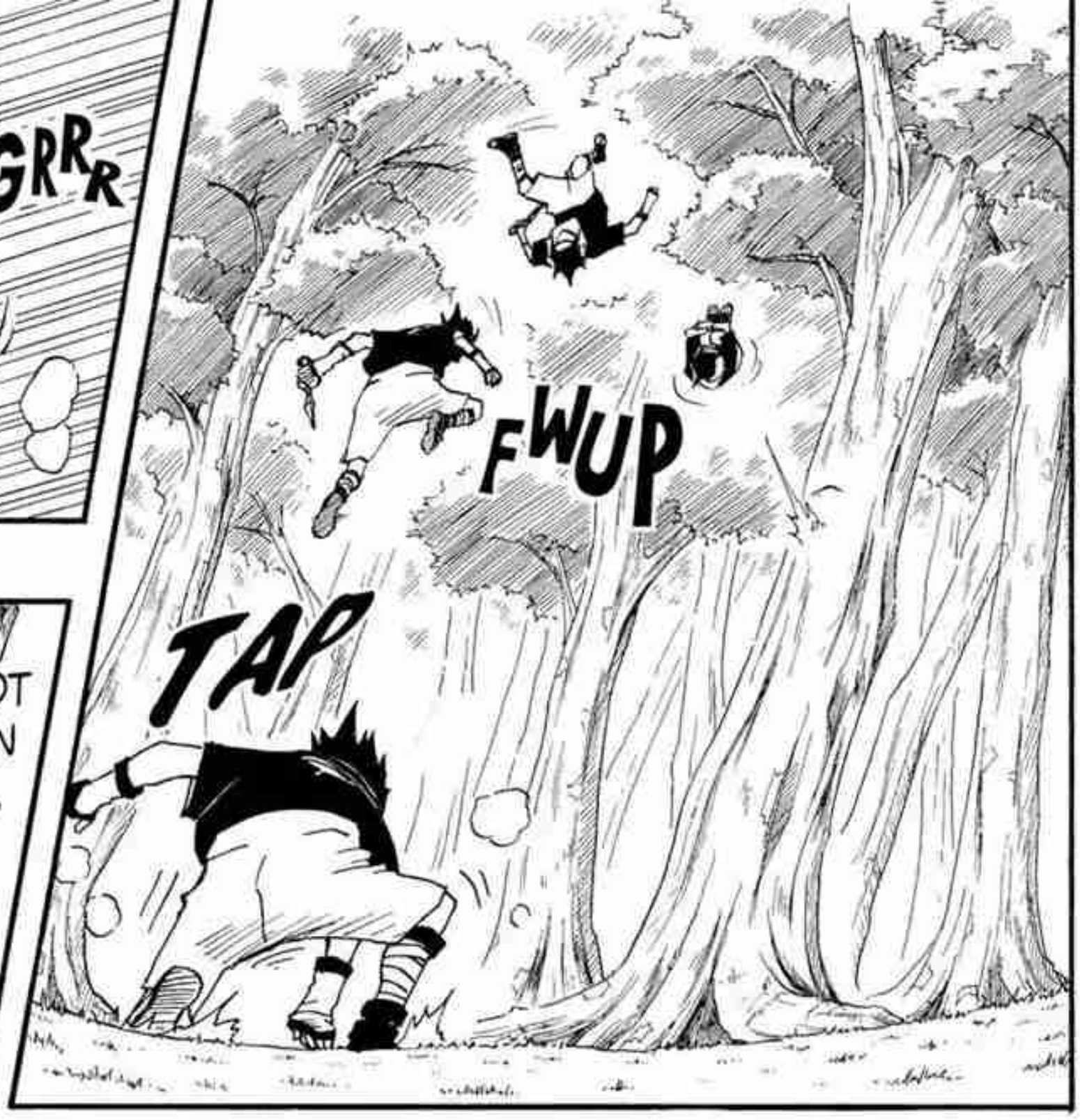
TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK

WHOOP

BRAAM

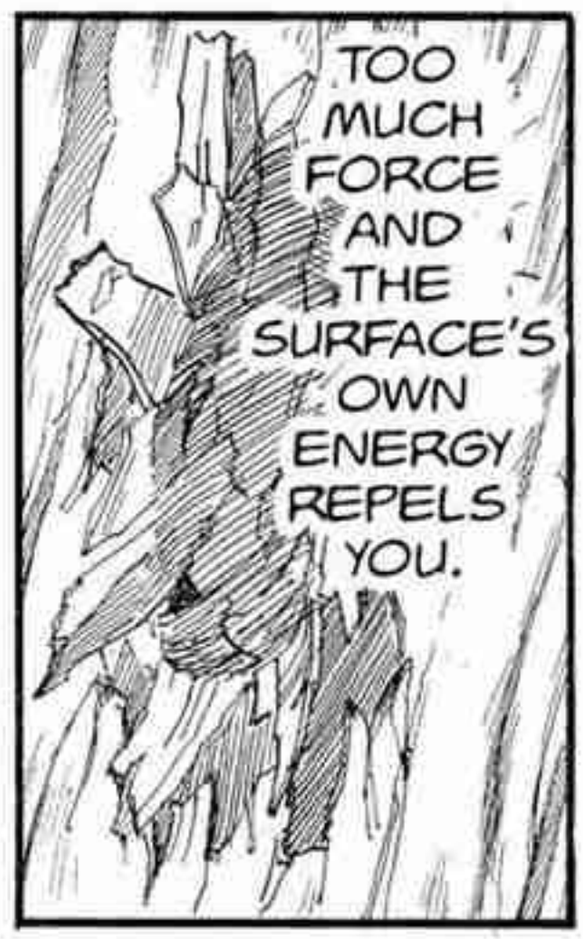
OWWW..!!!

GRRR


FWUP
TAP

MAINTAINING FOCUS IS A LOT HARDER THAN I EXPECTED...

...SO YOU END UP LIKE NARUTO.
TOO LITTLE, AND YOU'LL NEVER ADHERE IN THE FIRST PLACE...
AAARGH!!
FLIP FLIP


TOO MUCH FORCE AND THE SURFACE'S OWN ENERGY REPELS YOU.

THIS IS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT!
!

THERE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NARUTO AND SASUKE IN A NUTSHELL.
HUH...!!

SAKURA...?!

GIGGLE

WELL, NOW WE KNOW WHICH OF YOU THREE HAS THE BEST CONTROL OVER HER CHAKRAS.

OUR YOUNG LADY.

SIGH

I WANTED TO IMPRESS SASUKE... BUT THE ONLY ONE WHO CARED WAS NARUTO...

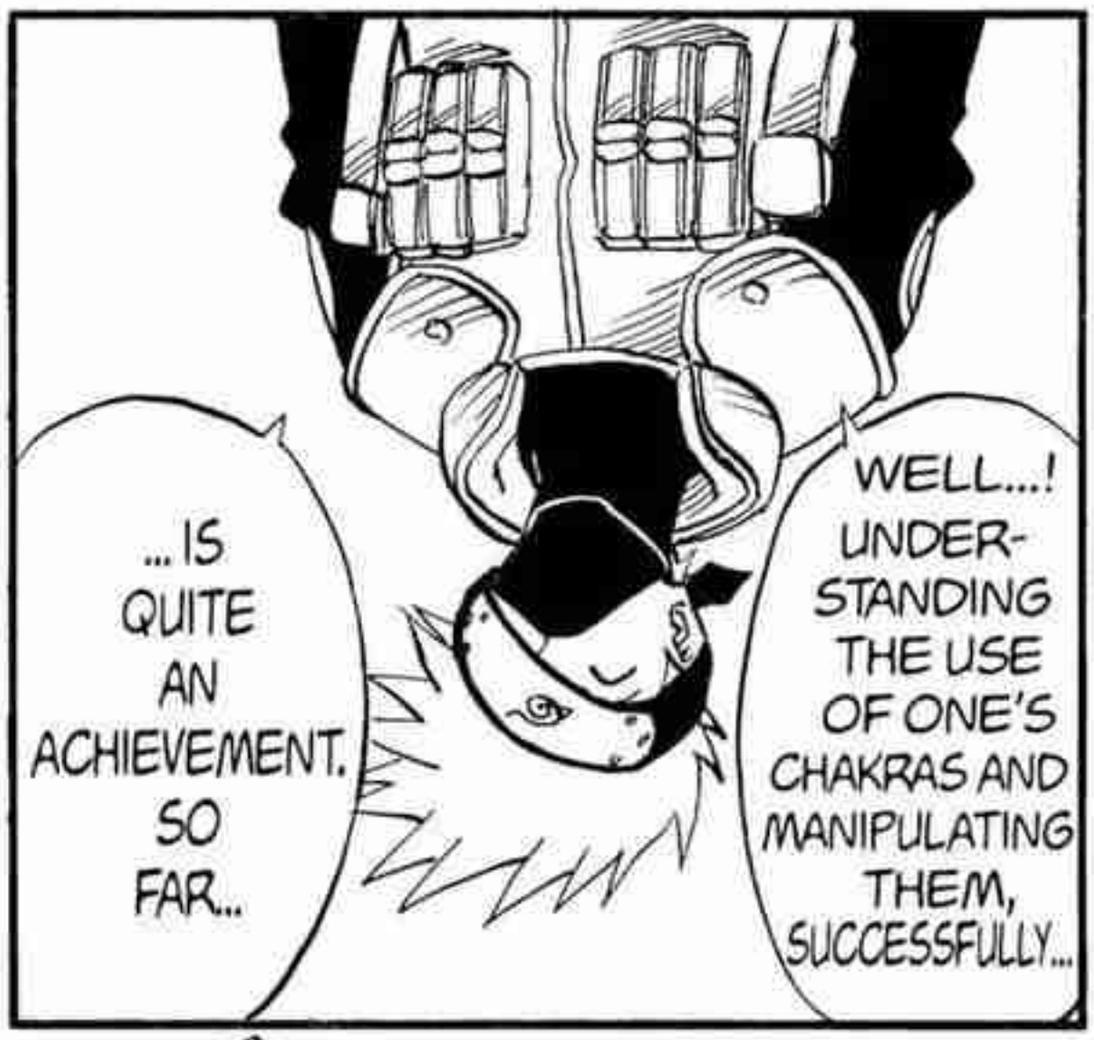
...JUST LIKE ALWAYS!

INCREDIBLE!! YOU GO, SAKURA! THAT'S MY GIRL!!!

...ALTHOUGH... IT DOES KIND OF TICK ME OFF!

SIGH

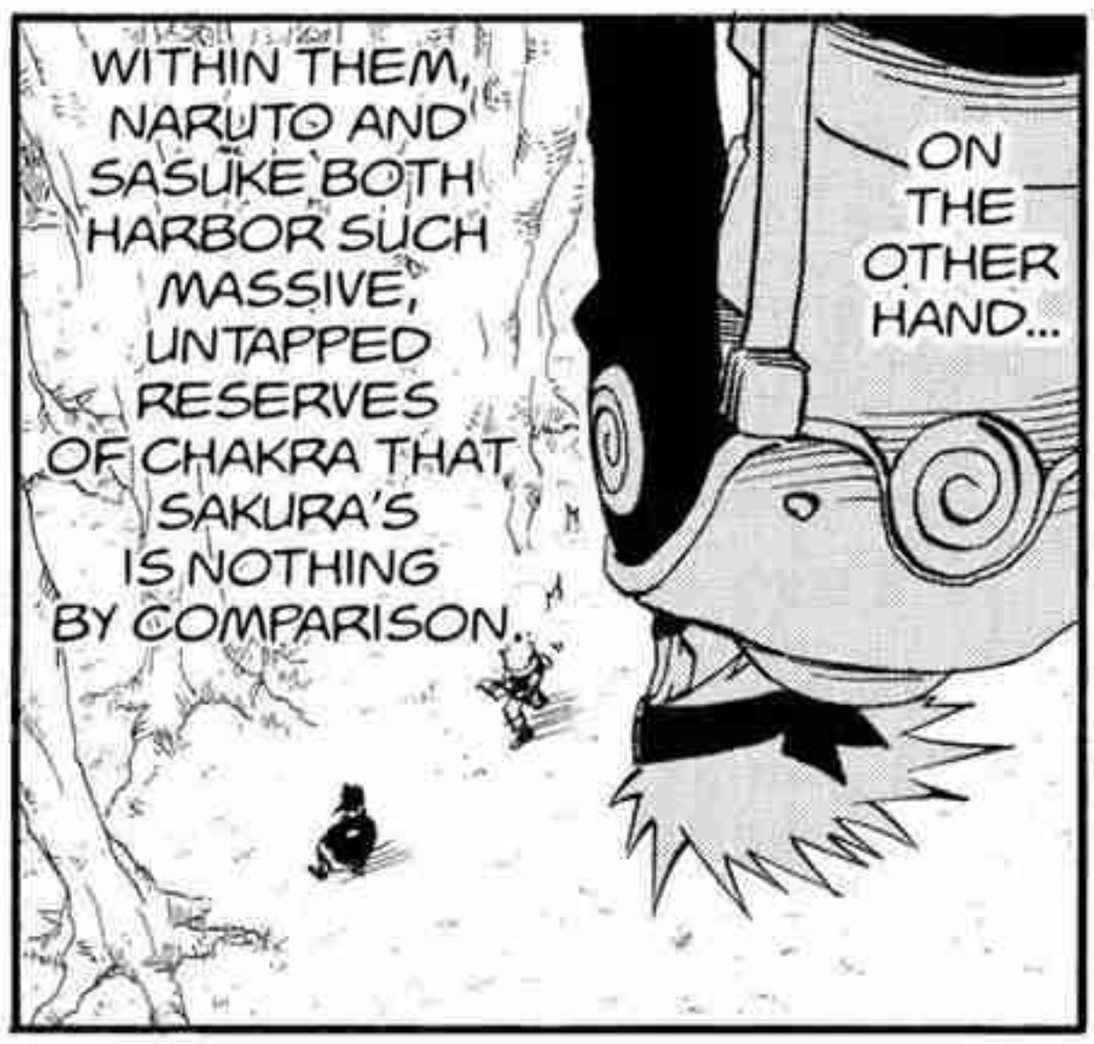
... SAKURA IS PROBABLY THE ONE CLOSEST TO OVERTAKING OUR LEADER, LORD HOKAGE...
DESPITE ALL OF NARUTO'S BOASTS AND ASPIRATIONS...


WELL...! UNDER-STANDING THE USE OF ONE'S CHAKRAS AND MANIPULATING THEM, SUCCESSFULLY...
... IS QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT. SO FAR...

MASTER KAKASHI, HOW COULD YOU?!
SASUKE'S GOING TO HATE ME!

AND THE FINEST HOPE OF CLAN UCHIHA DOESN'T SEEM TOO IMPRESSIVE, EITHER.
STAB

... BY THE END, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAP THOSE VAST RESOURCES.
IF THIS LESSON GOES AS PLANNED...

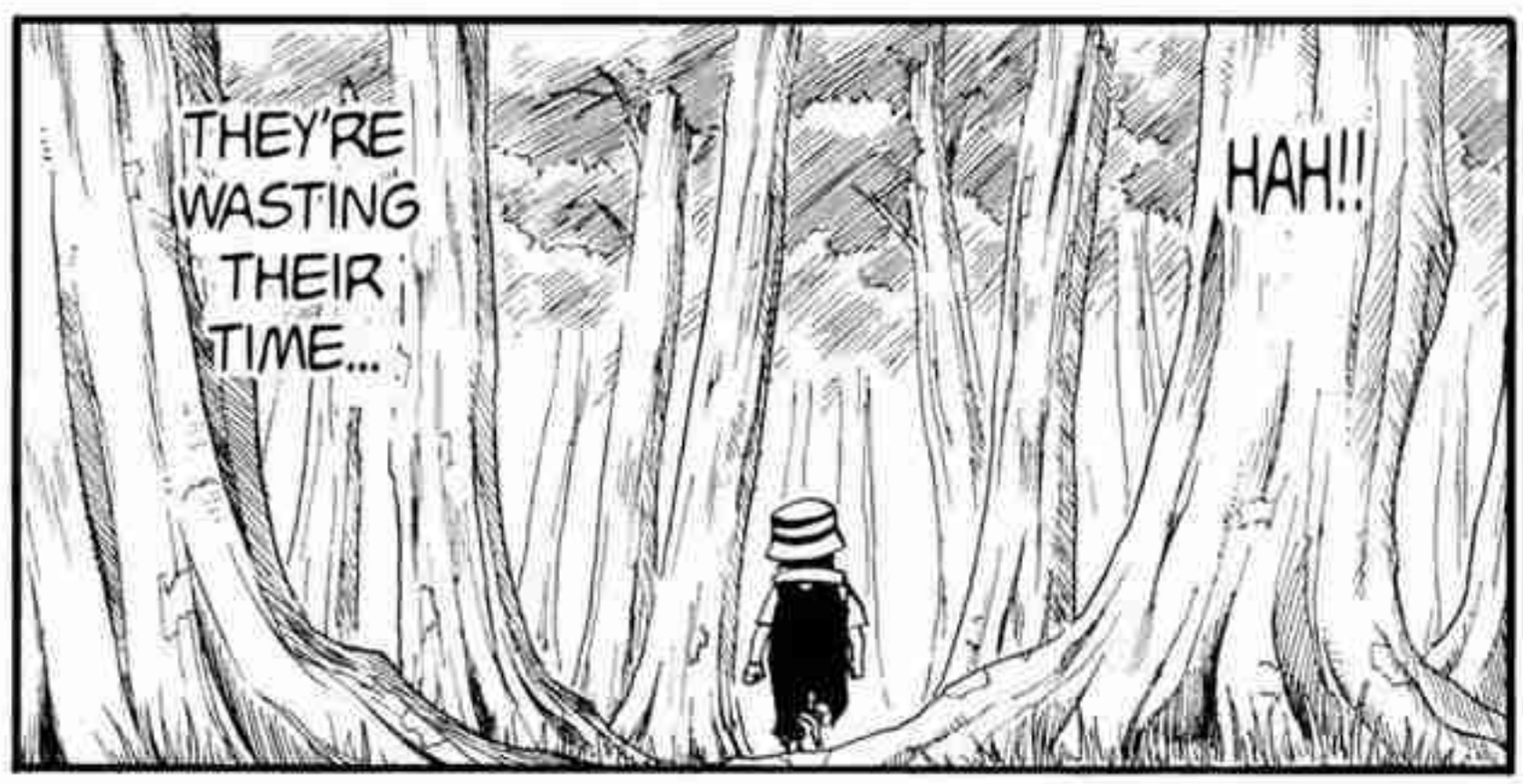

WITHIN THEM, NARUTO AND SASUKE BOTH HARBOR SUCH MASSIVE, UNTAPPED RESERVES OF CHAKRA THAT SAKURA'S IS NOTHING BY COMPARISON...
ON THE OTHER HAND...

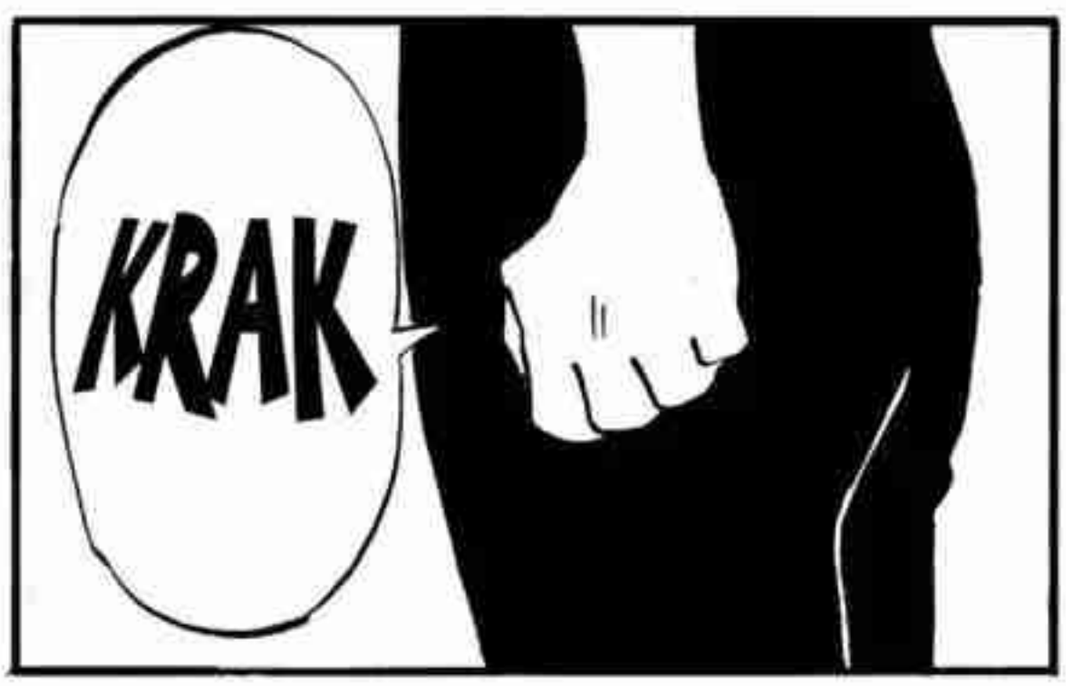
AND I WILL!!

RIP OR

GRP

ALL RIGHT--! FOR STARTERS, AT LEAST I CAN CATCH UP WITH SASUKE!



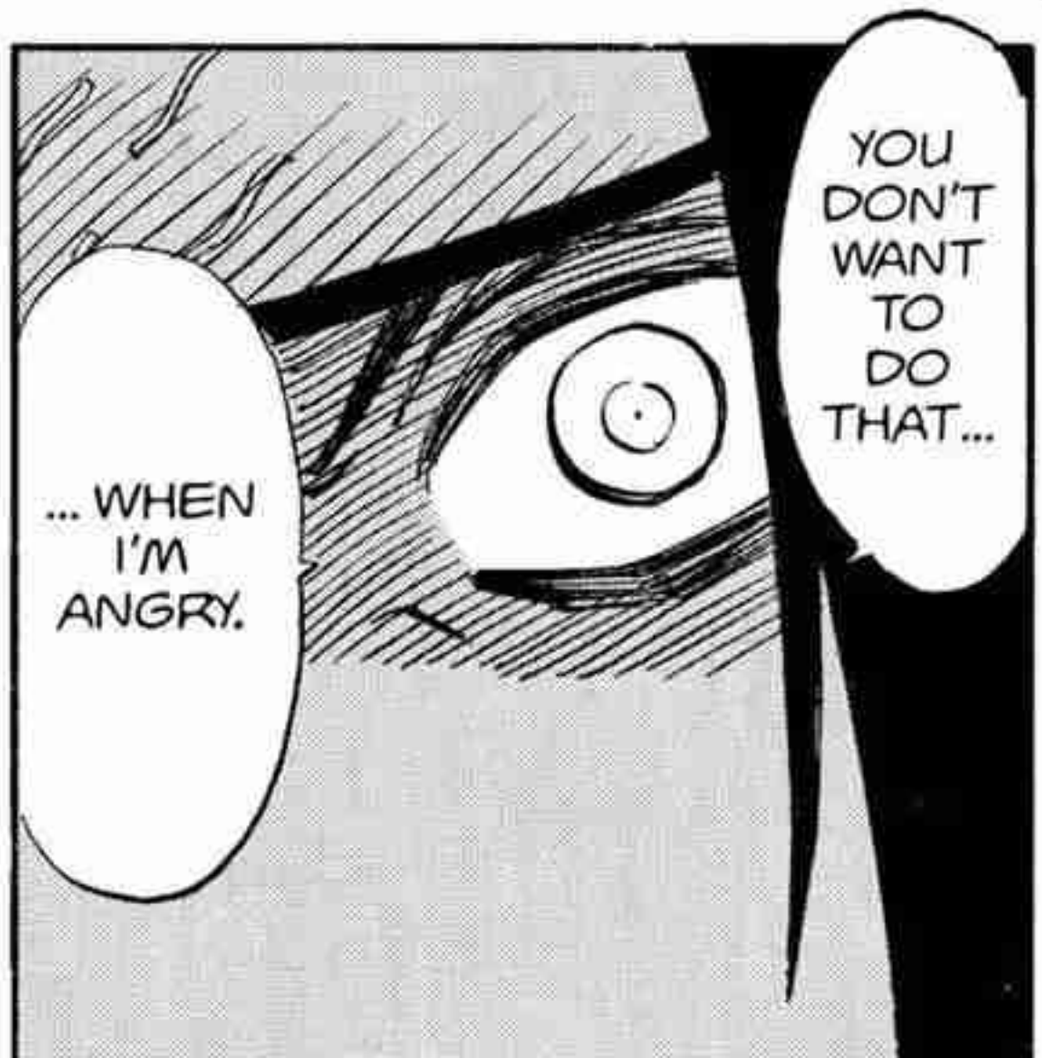


KREEEAK
NINJA FROM THE LAND OF THE MIST WOULD APPEAR TO BE VASTLY OVERRATED.
I'M SURPRISED YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO SHOW YOUR FACE AROUND HERE AFTER TAKING A BEATING LIKE THAT.
ZOURI SAMURAI BODYGUARD IN THE SERVICE OF GATÔ
WARAJI SAMURAI BODYGUARD IN THE SERVICE OF GATÔ

...
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.
YOU CAN'T EVEN CLEAN UP FOR YOUR MISERABLE SUBORDINATES. "DEMON"... YEAH RIGHT!
RRR
SO...
TAK TAK
WAIT A MINUTE, YOU TWO...
SHFF
ARE THEY GOING TO ATTACK...?
NOTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

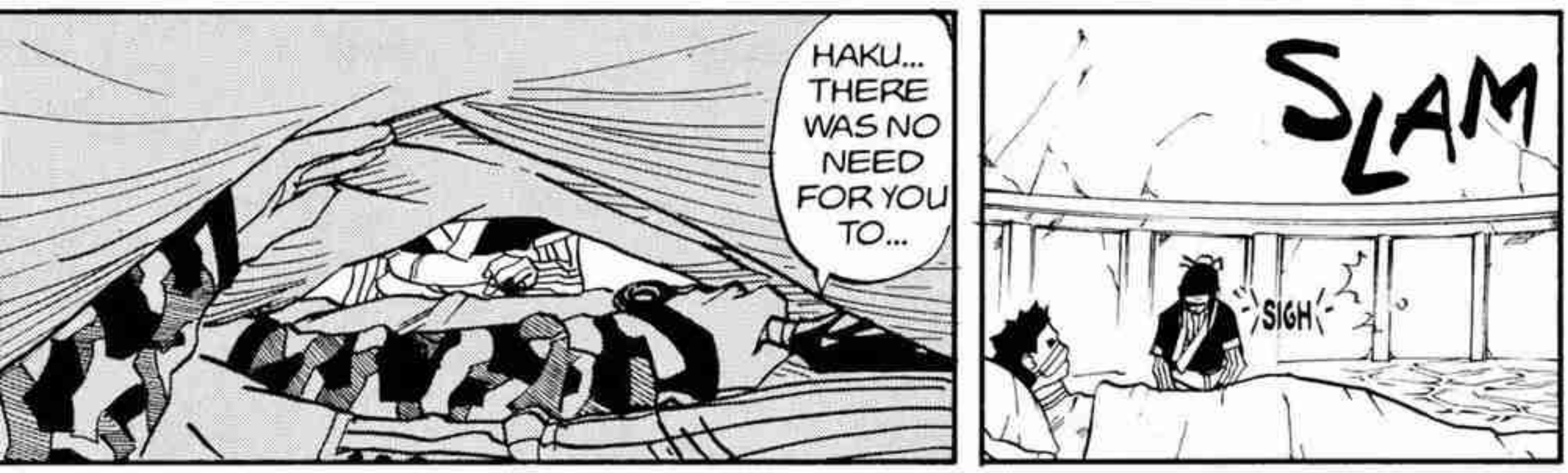
GRAB
!
NO LAST WORDS?
AAARGH!!!
DON'T DEFILE LORD ZABUZA WITH YOUR TOUCH.
HOW DARE YOU?!

!!
!!


YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT...
... WHEN I'M ANGRY.

HE DIDN'T EVEN SEEM TO MOVE...!
N-NO...

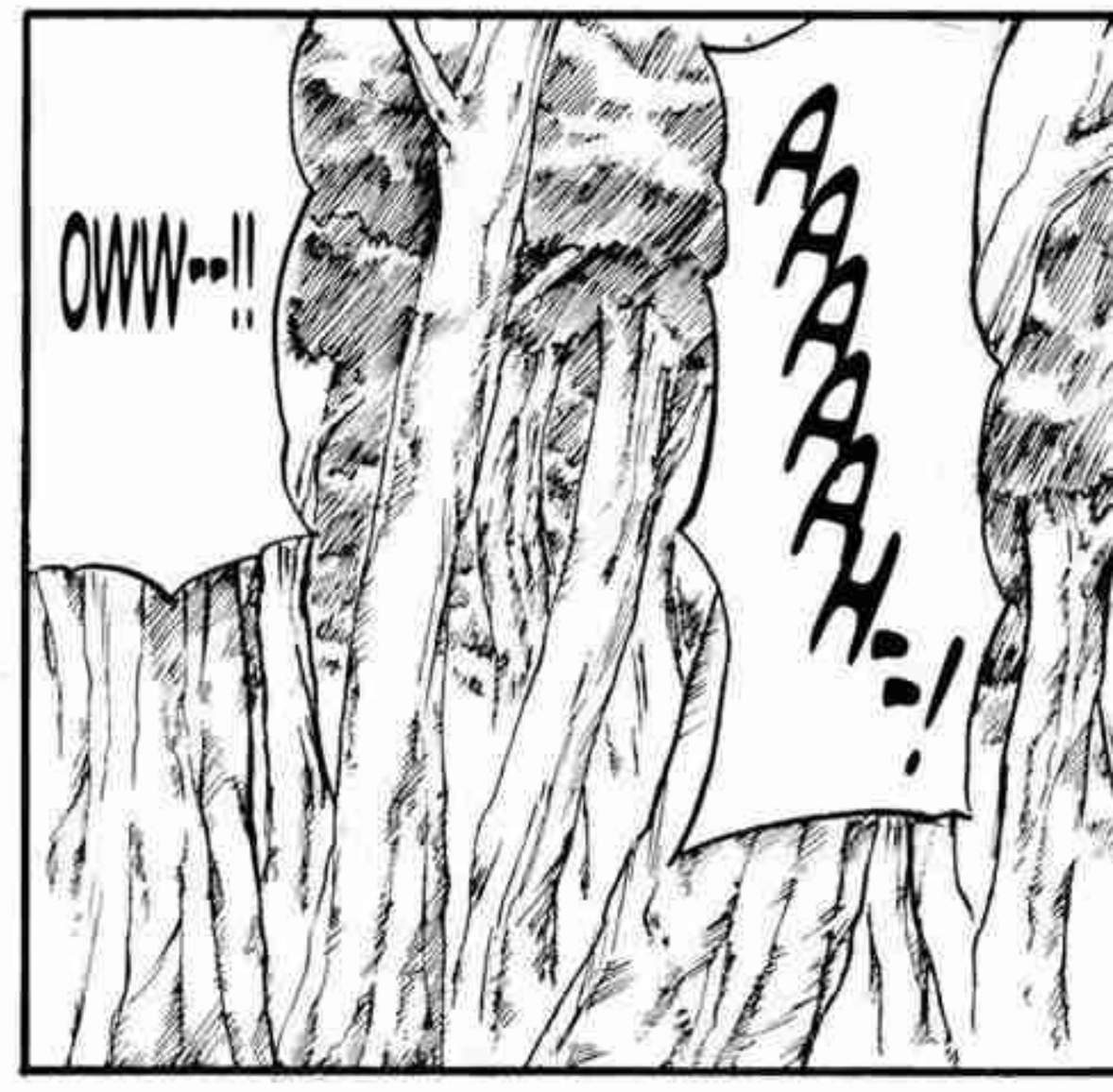
I-IF YOU FAIL AGAIN, DON'T THINK YOU CAN COME BACK HERE!
MY- SWORD-
I'M GOING
SHF
KLANG
TH-THERE HAD BETTER NOT BE ANY MORE MISTAKES.
HE'S SOME KIND OF MONSTER...

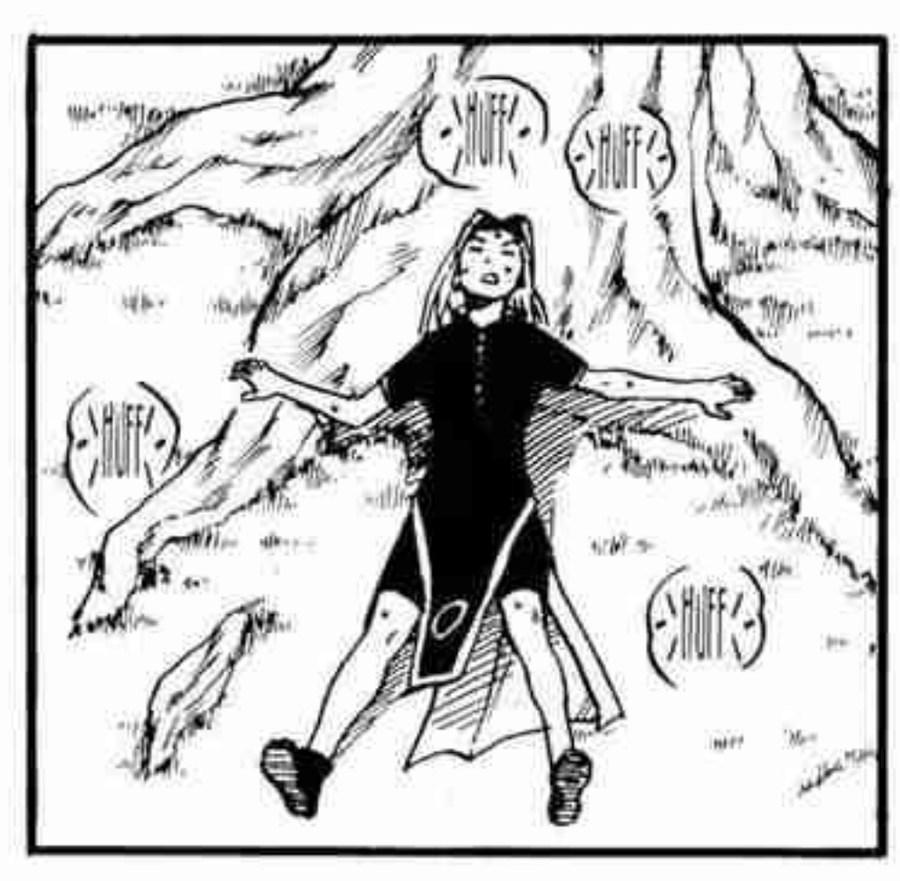

HAKU... THERE WAS NO NEED FOR YOU TO...
SLAM
SIGH

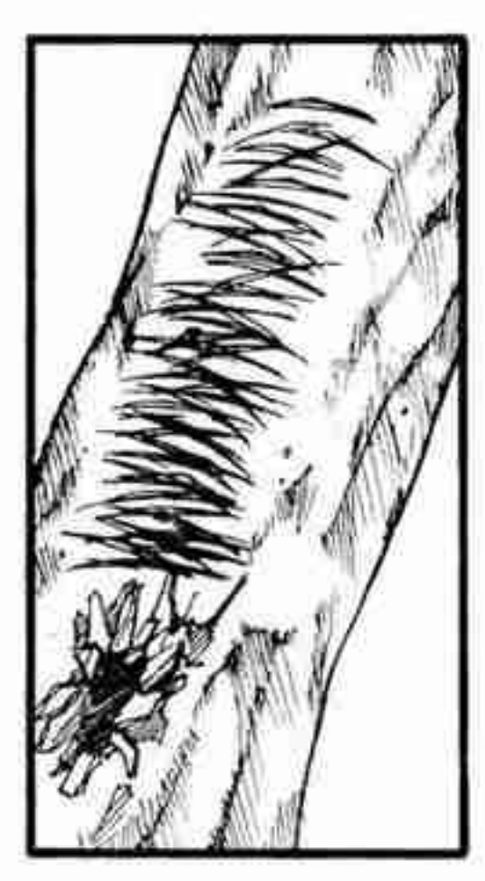
IF WE CAUSE A COMMOTION WHERE WE ARE, WE MIGHT FIND OURSELVES ON THE RUN FROM THEM AGAIN.
BUT IT'S TOO SOON TO FINISH GATÔ OFF.
I KNOW...

AHHH..
...YES!
FOR NOW, LET'S BE PATIENT.

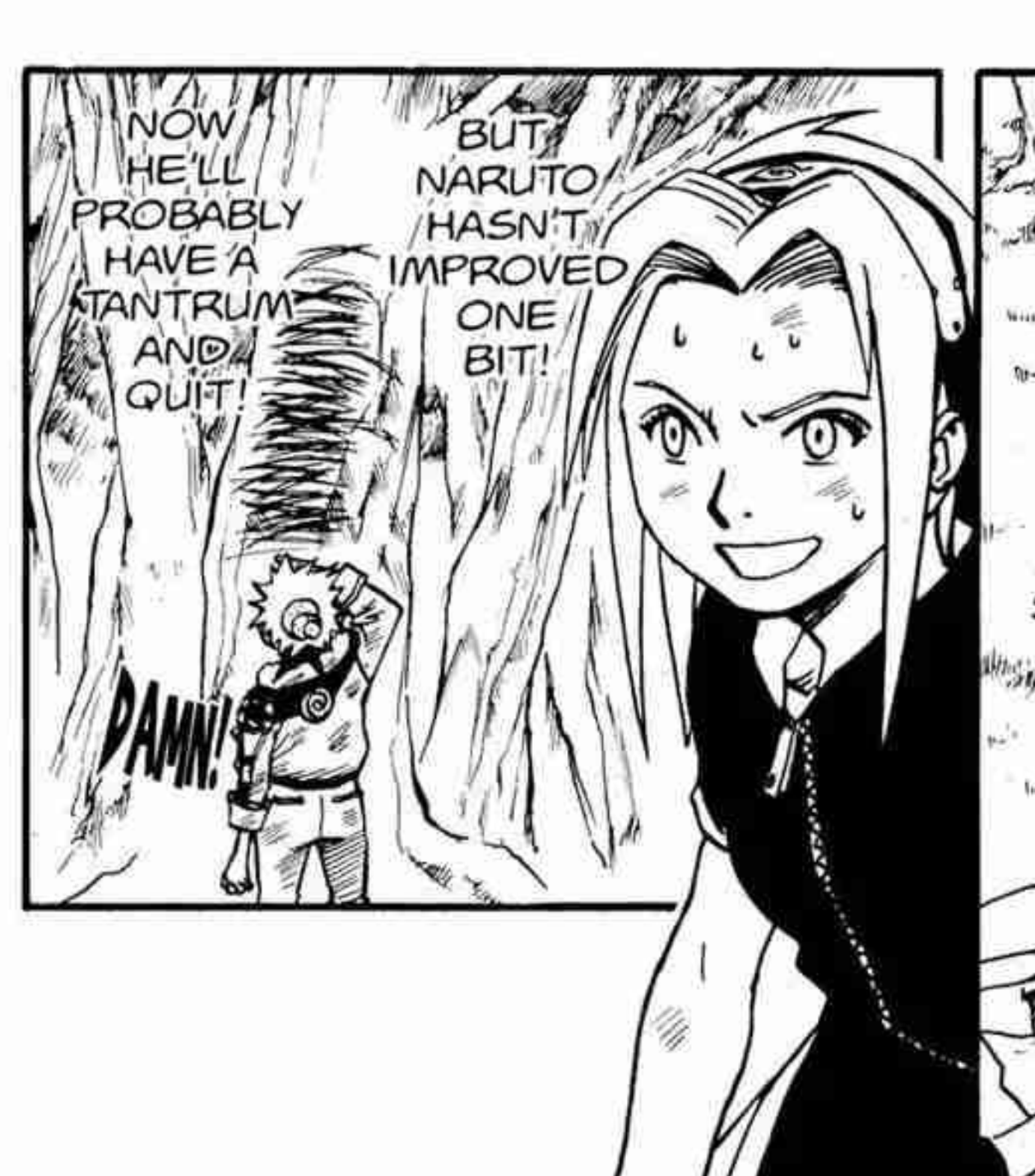
TWITCH
TWITCH
PUFF
HUFF
OOH
OOH
HUFF


OWW--!!
AAAAAH-!

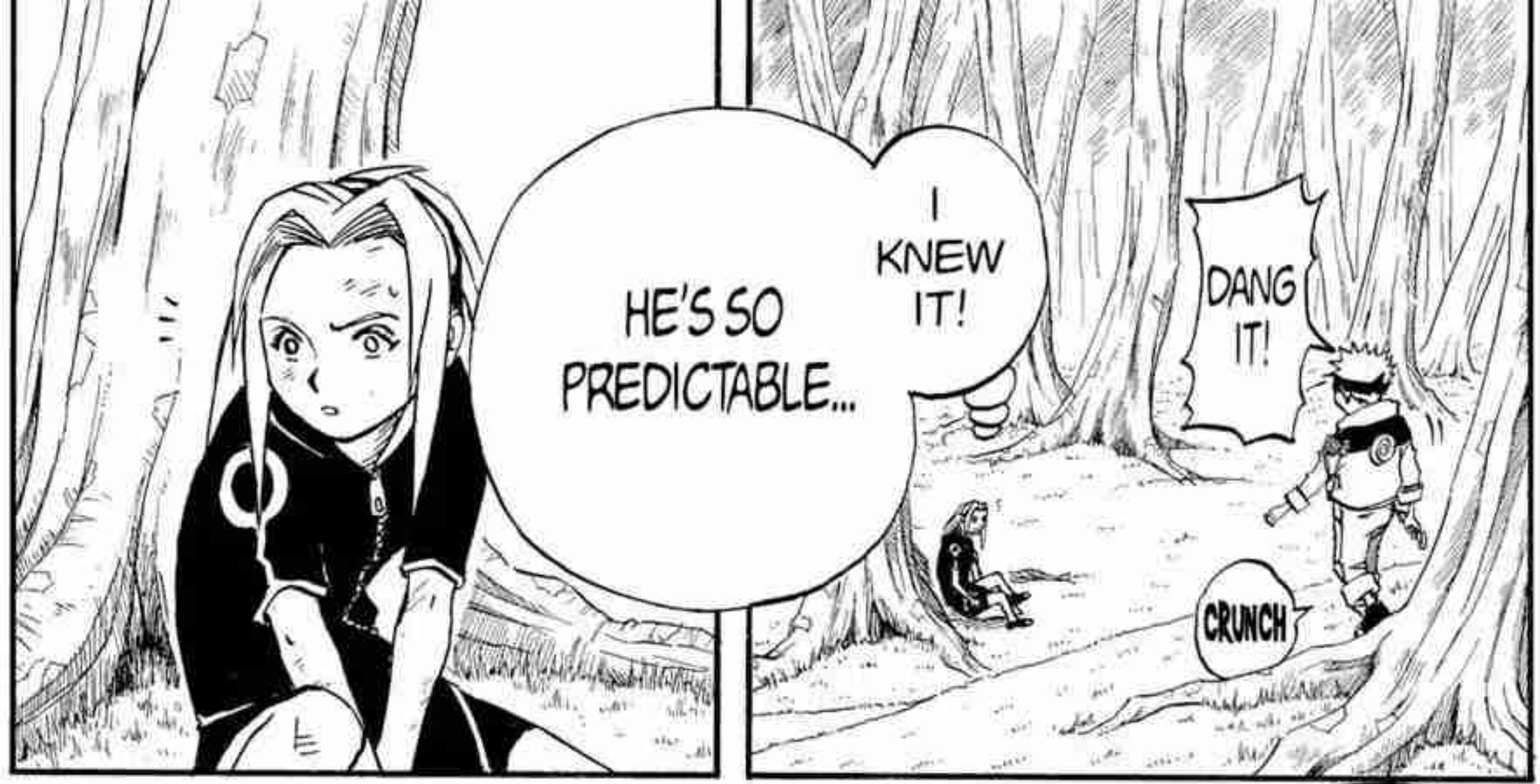

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF



HUFF
HUFF
PUFF


NOW HE'LL PROBABLY HAVE A TANTRUM AND QUIT!
BUT NARUTO HASN'T IMPROVED ONE BIT!
DAMN!

THE BOYS HAVE SO MUCH STAMINA...
...I'M... EXHAUSTED!
HUFF


HE'S SO PREDICTABLE...
I KNEW IT!
DANG IT!
CRUNCH

I WONDER HOW STRONG HE'LL BECOME.
NARUTO'S DEVELOPING... GROWING UP.

HEY, HEY! SAKURA! COULD YOU HELP ME GET THE HANG OF THIS?
HUNH?

THAT WOULD BE A MARVEL... AND A PLEASURE!
...AND, PERHAPS MINE, AS WELL!
HIS LATENT ABILITIES DWARF EVEN THOSE OF SASUKE...
IF HE ONLY KNEW!

A boy who is as isolated and lonely as Naruto.

EARLY CHARACTER DESIGNS

This was the original design for the character of Sasuke. It's hardly changed at all over time.

The main difference is the absence of the talisman he wore around his neck. In general, whenever I come up with a new character, my initial impulse is so use as much line and ornamentation as possible until the visual concept is in danger of becoming lost amid the busy, little details.

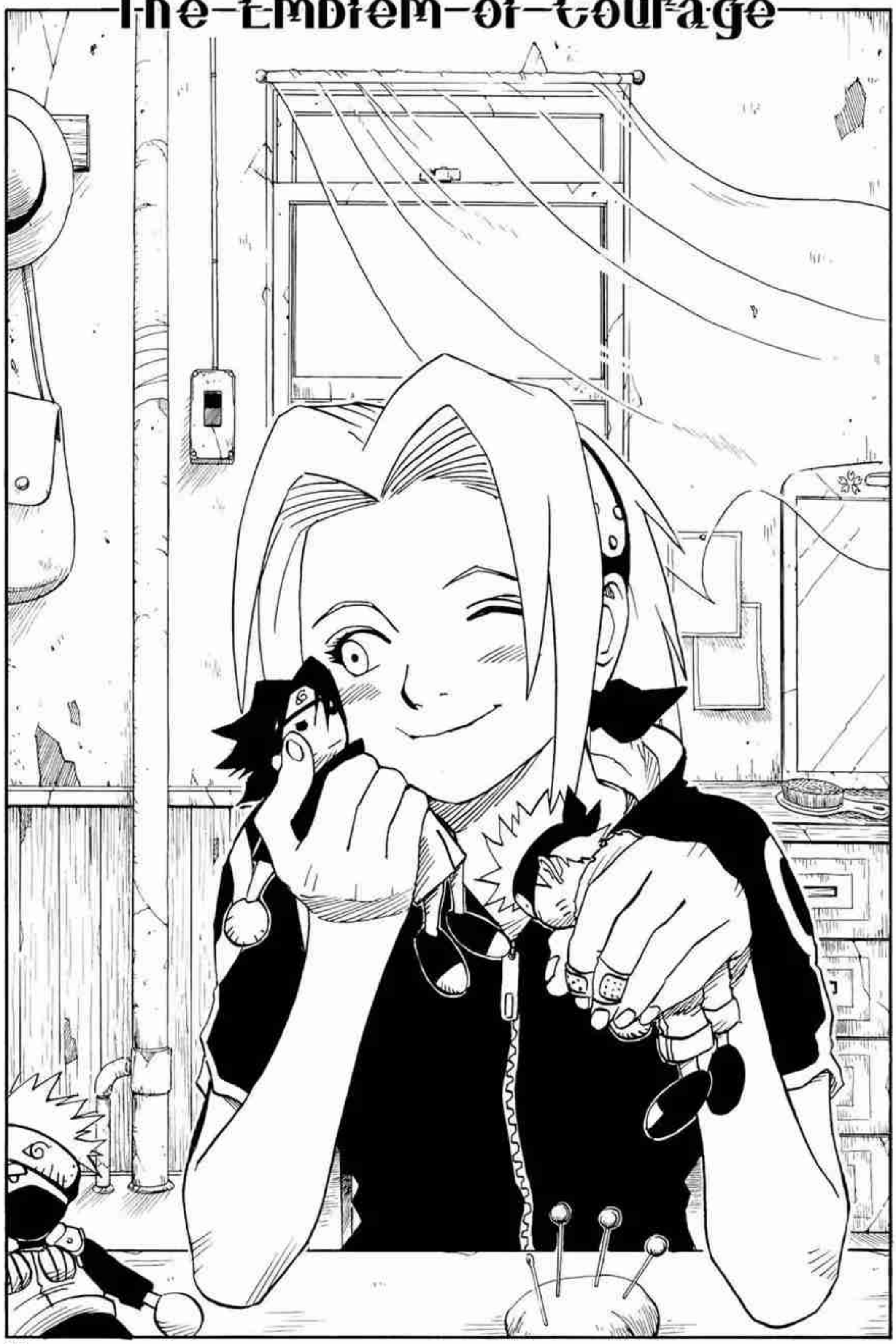
This is especially true of principal characters. I get so caught up in what I'm doing with them, I make things much too difficult for myself; until I finally have the sense to step back and ask myself, "Am I really going to be able to draw such a fussy, complicated character over and over, panel after panel, and issue after issue, week in and week out?"

There was far too much going on visually with Sasuke, and too many lines overall, so I simplified him into a good, basic contrast to Naruto's visual image.

Sasuke is a particular challenge for me to draw even now, because he is a young and rather pretty boy, but if I'm not careful he loses his youthful quality and I end up drawing him like a much older boy or a grown man. I've never had a character like him in one of my comics before—that kind of boy on the cusp of manhood, who's somehow mature and handsome beyond his years.

Keeping the visual consistently right makes him the character who takes the most work and energy from me. Maybe that's why he's become my favorite character.

Number 19:
The Emblem of Courage



BORRRING!

YAWWWN!

KLONK

KLONK

KLANK

BAM

BAM

RATCH

RATCH

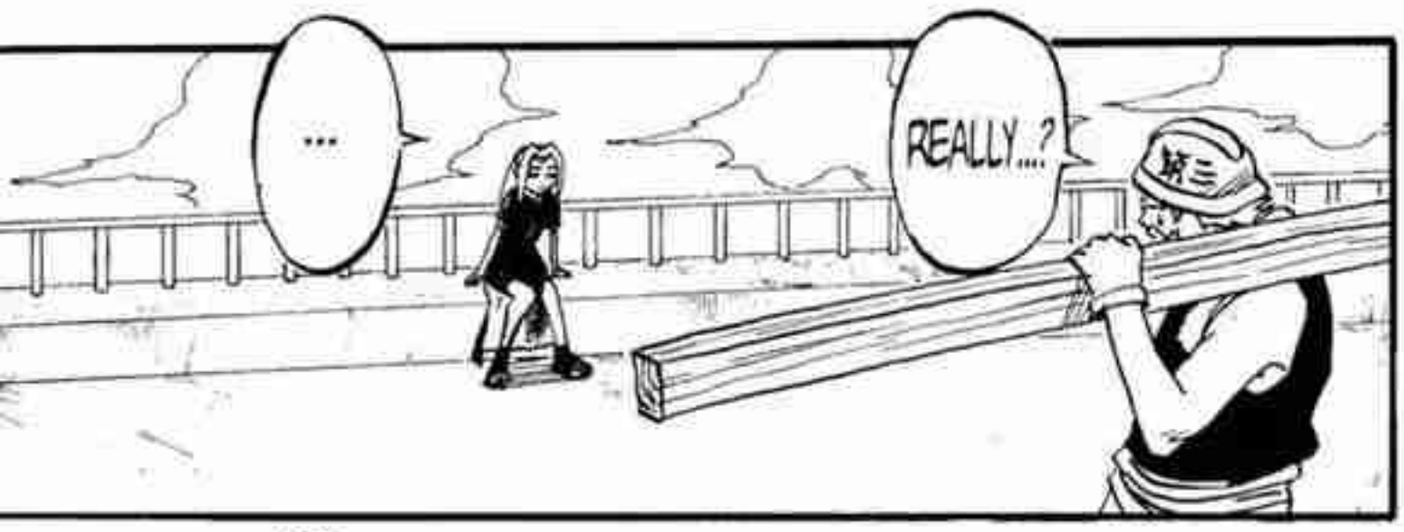
SIGH
SKIF

WHERE ARE BLONDIE AND PRETTY-BOY?
安全

ALL ALONE AND LONESOME?

MASTER KAKASHI TOLD ME TO STAY HERE AND PROTECT YOU.
I SURPASSED THEM.

TRAINING.
THEN WHY AREN'T YOU WITH THEM?

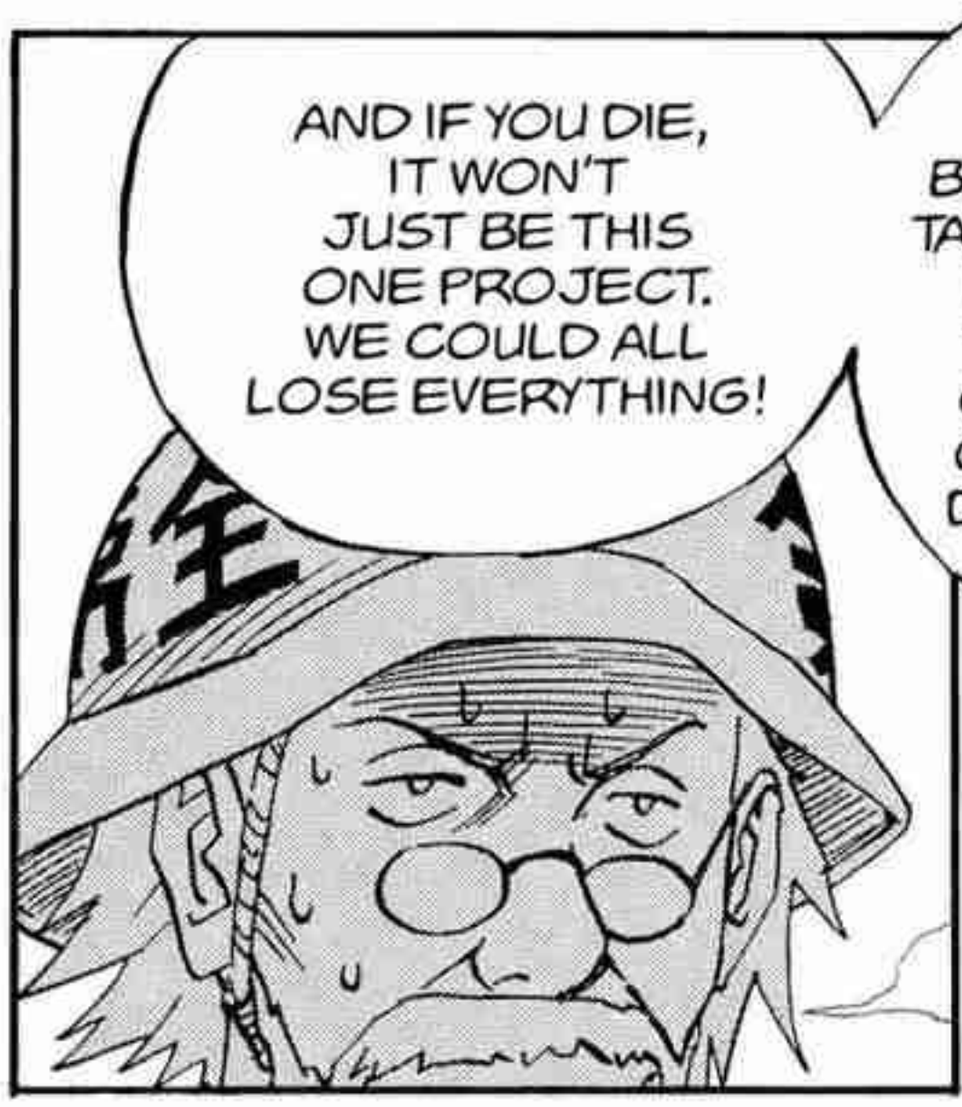

...
REALLY...?

WHAT'S WRONG, GIICHI?
HUNH?

CAN I TALK TO YOU?
TAZUNA...
GRUNT

OUT OF NOWHERE LIKE THIS... YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE!!
WH-WHY?!

I'VE BEEN THINKING IT OVER... THIS BRIDGE WE'RE WORKING ON...
I WANT OFF THE JOB!


AND IF YOU DIE, IT WON'T JUST BE THIS ONE PROJECT. WE COULD ALL LOSE EVERYTHING!
I WANT TO HELP YOU, BUT WE CAN'T TAKE THIS RISK. GATÔ WILL TAKE OUT A CONTRACT ON US IF WE DON'T STOP!

TAZUNA! WE GO BACK A LONG WAY.

I CAN'T DO THAT.

...

THE BRIDGE ISN'T WORTH IT.
PLEASE, JUST GIVE IT UP...

WHEN IT'S FINISHED, IT WILL BRING TRADE AND COMMERCE AND AFFLUENCE TO US, AND PUT OUR POOR, LITTLE LAND OF THE WAVES ON THE MAP!
IT'S EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN WORKING TOWARD, FOR OUR ENTIRE CITY.
THIS BRIDGE BELONGS TO US ALL.

GIICHI... YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME BACK.
第三

IT'S AFTERNOON NOW ALREADY, ISN'T IT? LET'S CALL IT A DAY.
BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT **LIVES** HERE. **YOUR** LIFE!

STOP, THIEF!!
PEEK PEEK
MY DAUGHTER ASKED ME TO PICK UP SOME THINGS FOR OUR LUNCH ON THE WAY HOME, SO...

RUSH
RUSSH
WILL DO ANY JOB YOU WANT

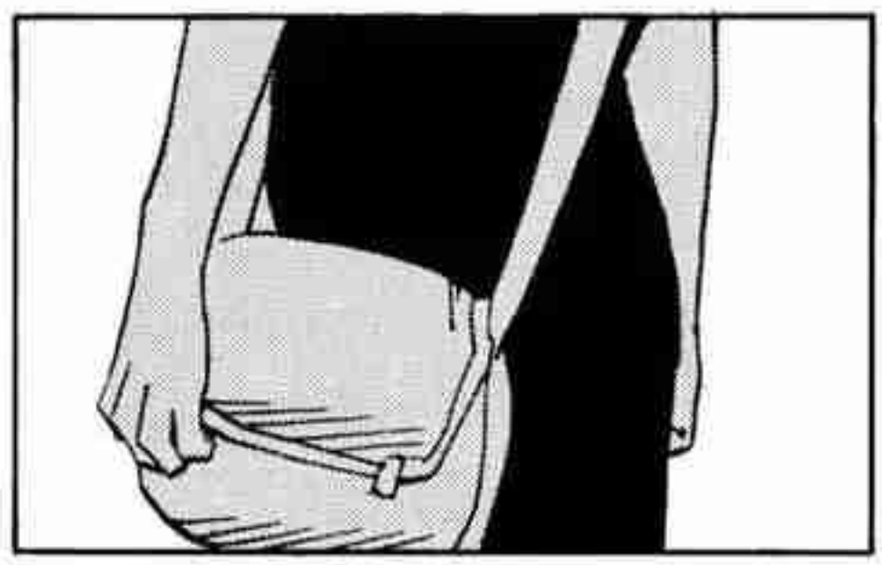
HERE WE ARE!
HE'S JUST A KID...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS TOWN?

THIS STORE HAS ALMOST NOTHING IN IT!

GROCERY
八百屋
DON'T PISS HERE
WELCOME!

HUN?!!



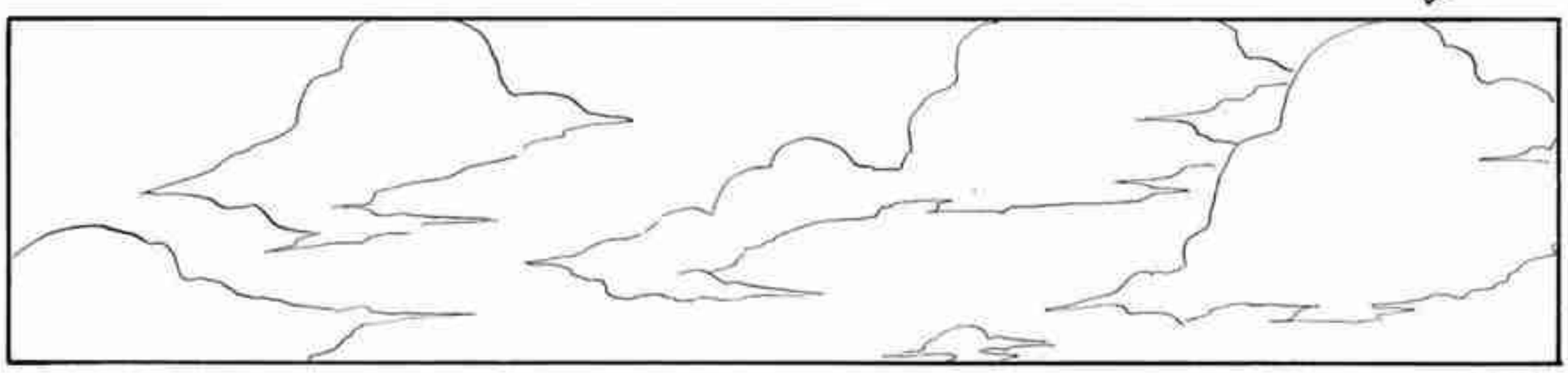
GRAB

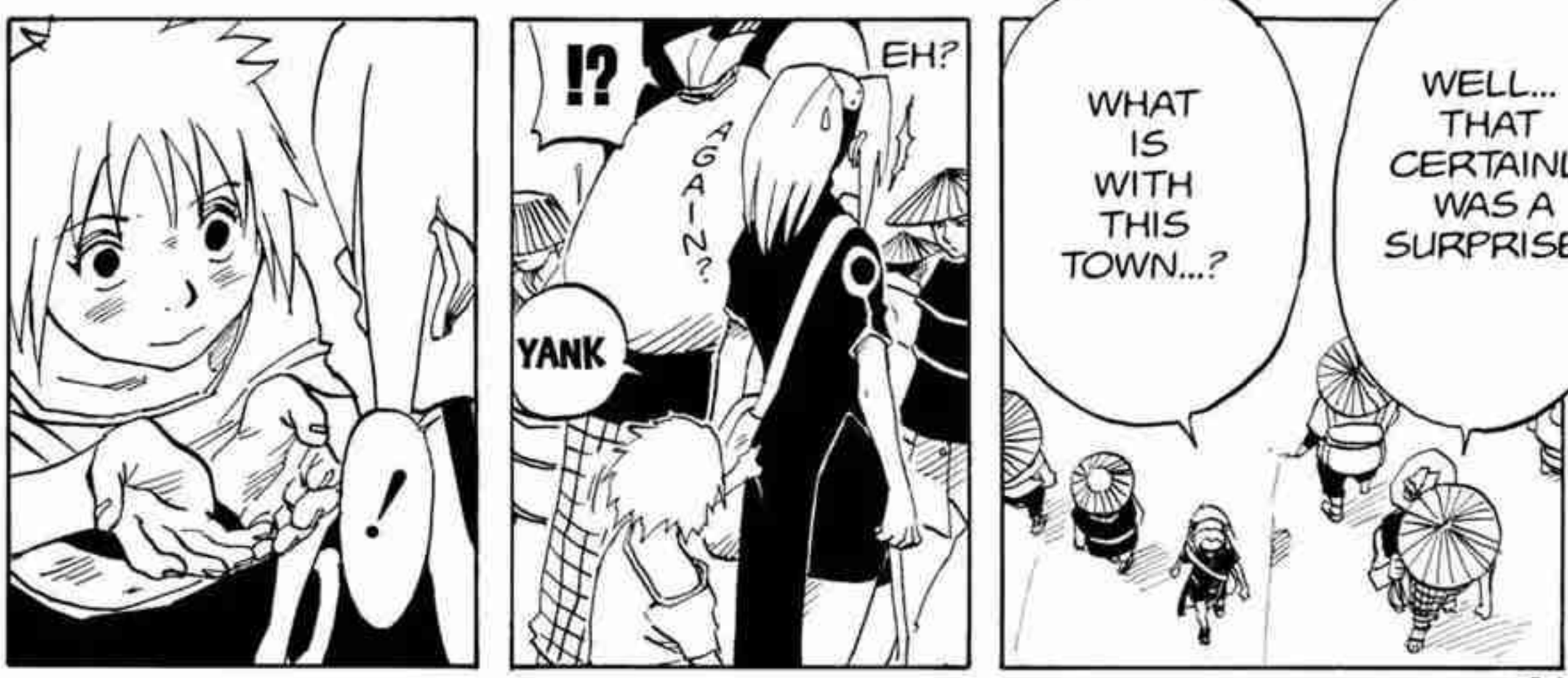
PERVERT-!!

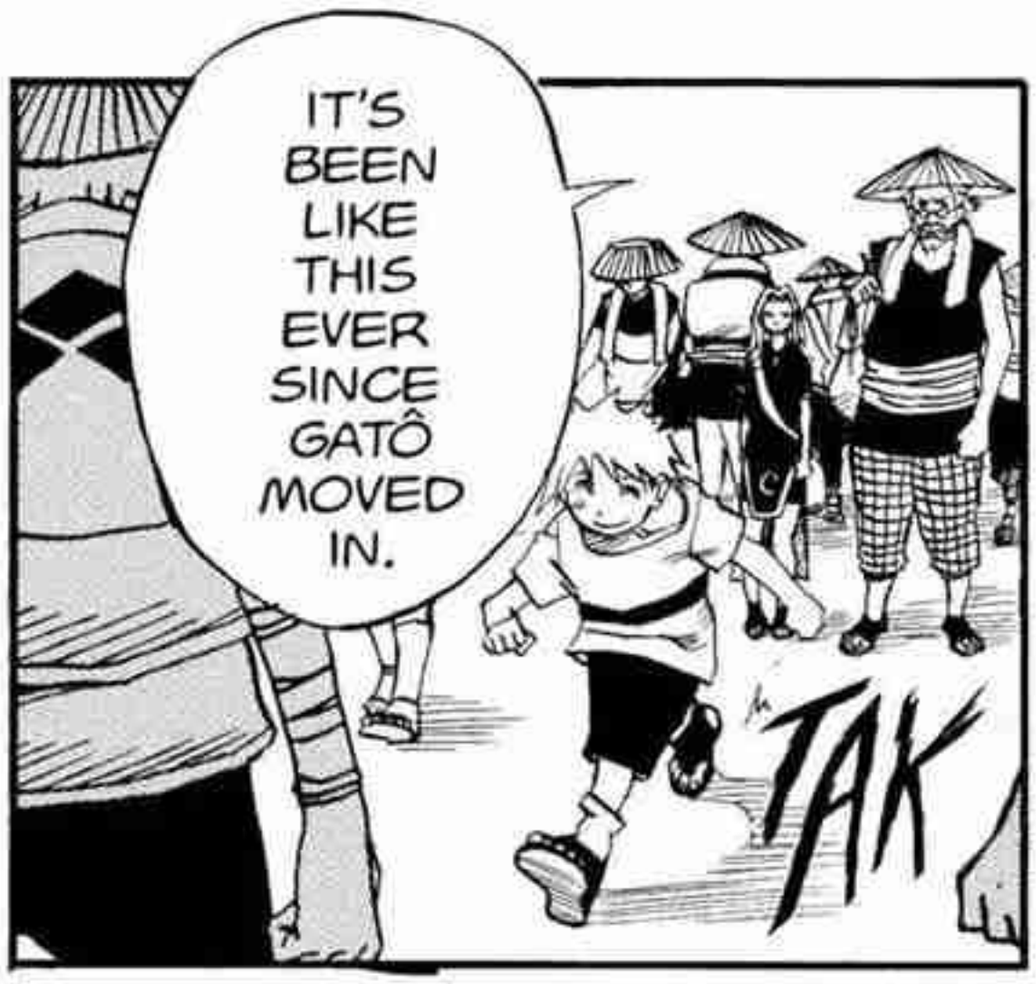
N-NO...

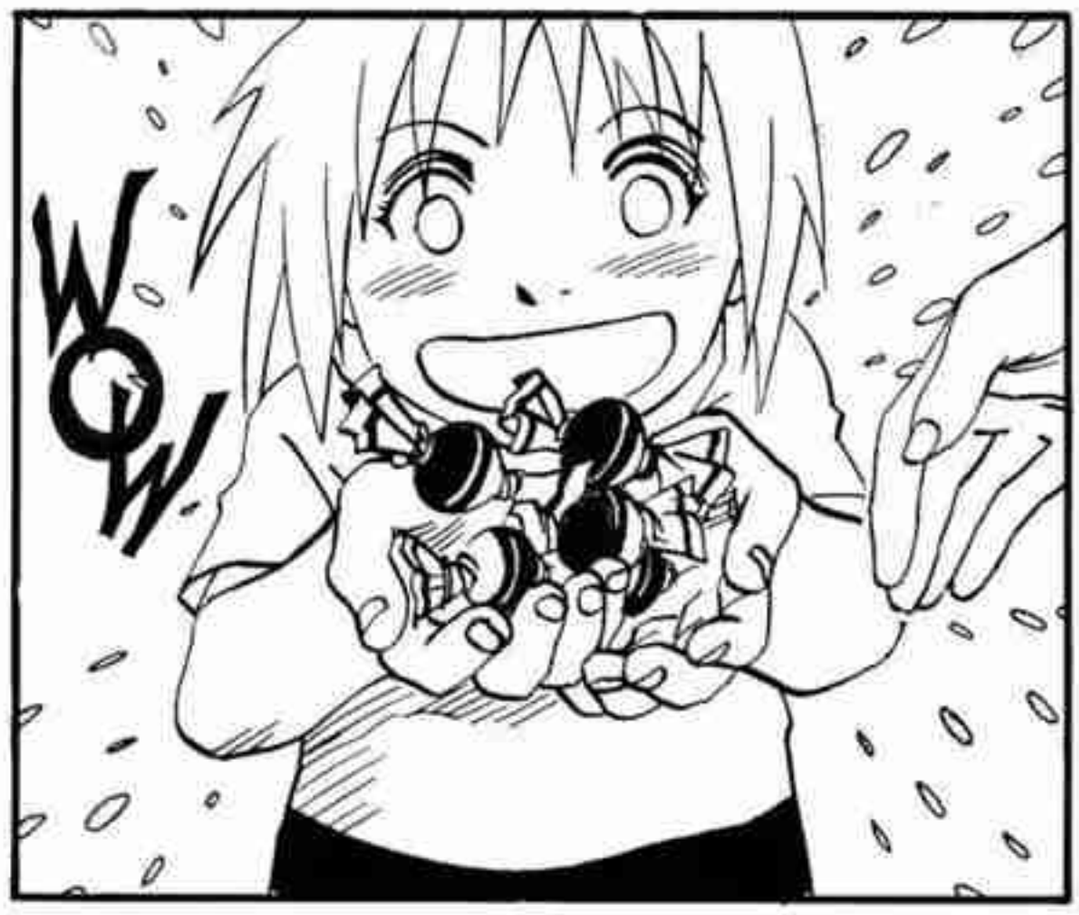
AHA--!

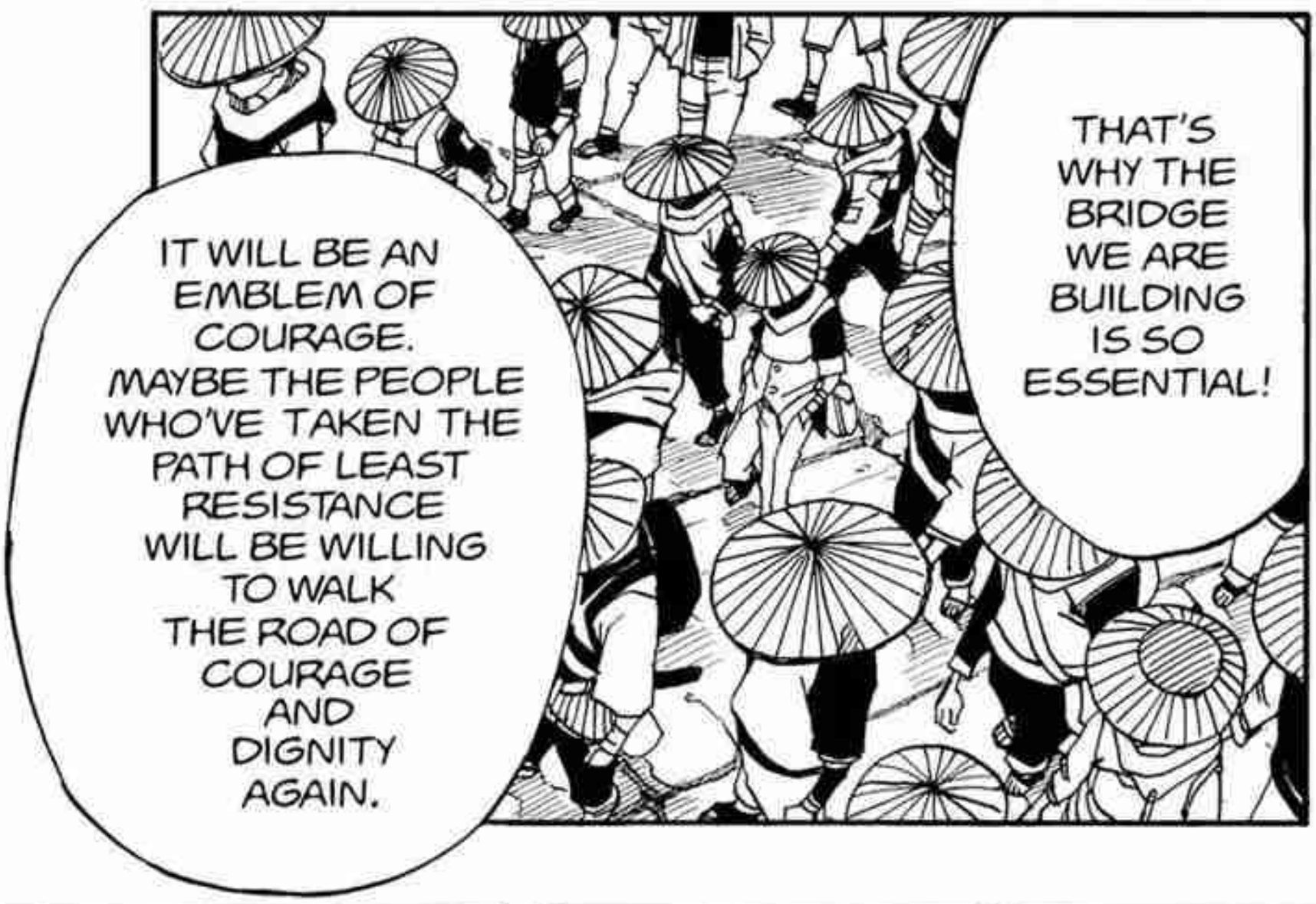
HYAAH--!!





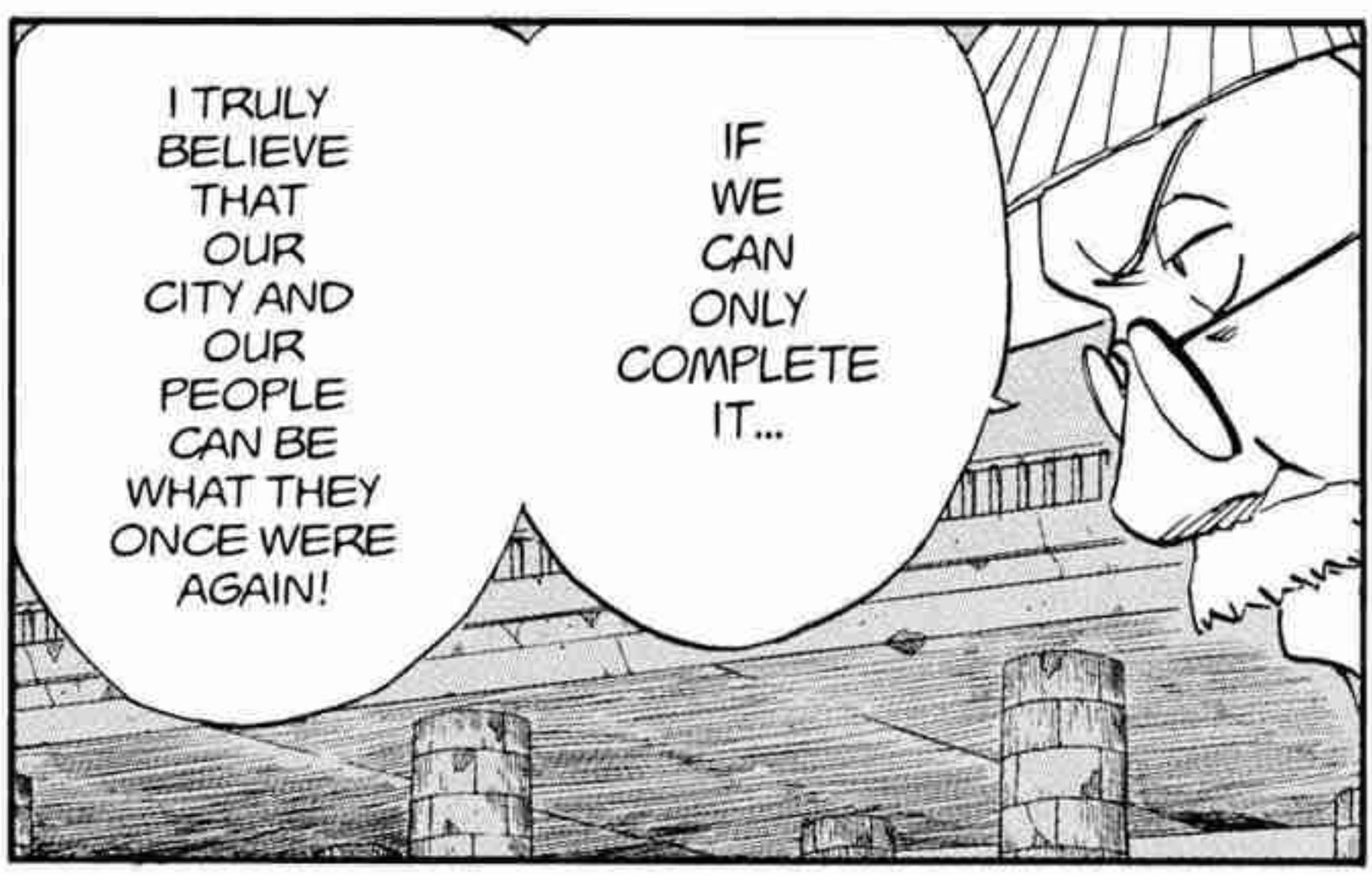

IT'S BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE GATÔ MOVED IN.
TAK


WOW


IT WILL BE AN EMBLEM OF COURAGE. MAYBE THE PEOPLE WHO'VE TAKEN THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE WILL BE WILLING TO WALK THE ROAD OF COURAGE AND DIGNITY AGAIN.
THAT'S WHY THE BRIDGE WE ARE BUILDING IS SO ESSENTIAL!

WE'VE BECOME A CITY OF SLACKERS, COWARDS, AND FOOLS!
...

SASUKE... NARUTO...


I TRULY BELIEVE THAT OUR CITY AND OUR PEOPLE CAN BE WHAT THEY ONCE WERE AGAIN!
IF WE CAN ONLY COMPLETE IT...

AAAAH!!
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

TAP

SLIP

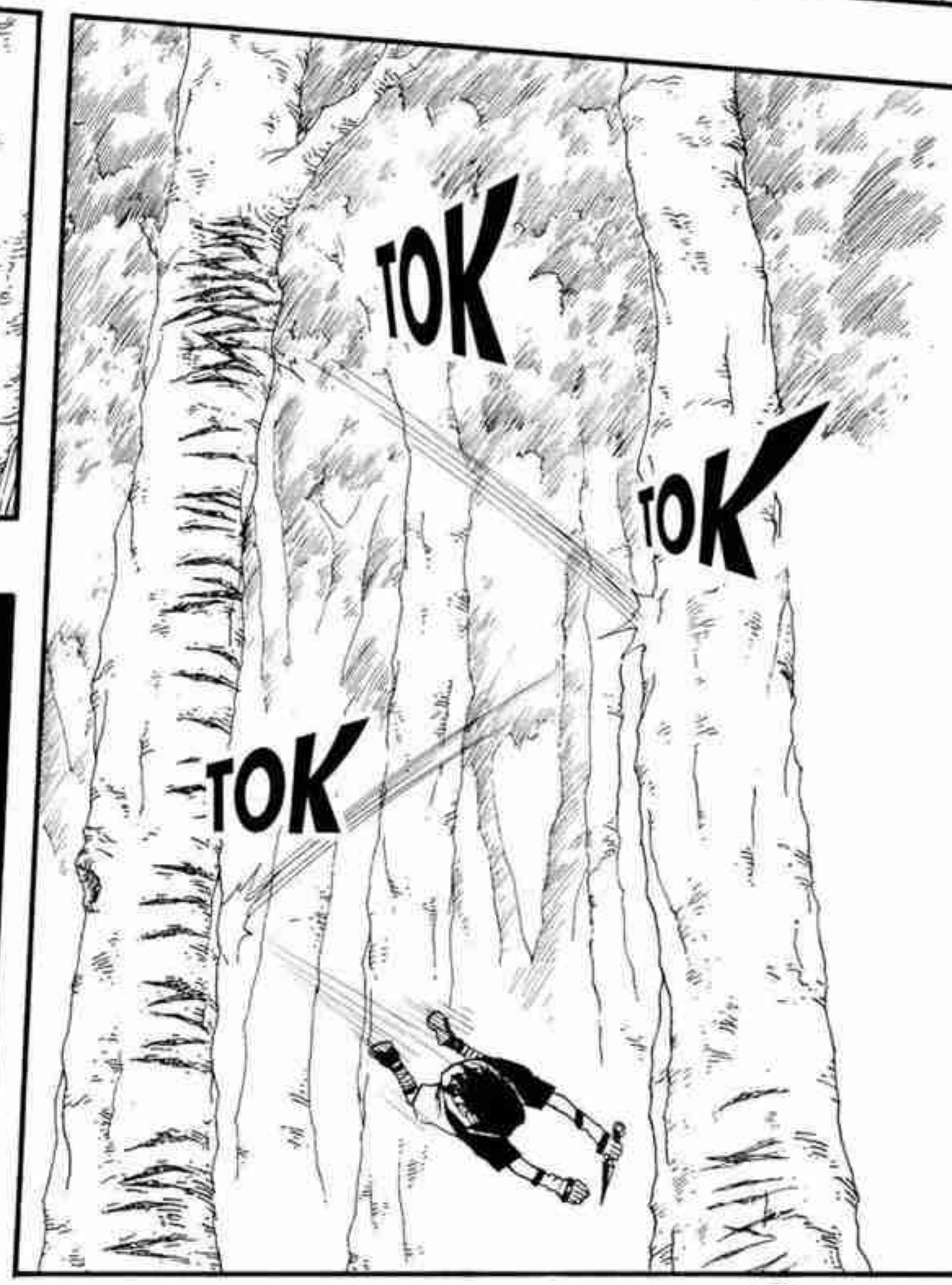
SLICE

!
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

THAT JERK SASUKE IS STILL CLIMBING!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
GRRR! HE'S STILL HIGHER THAN ME!

SLASH

SZIP

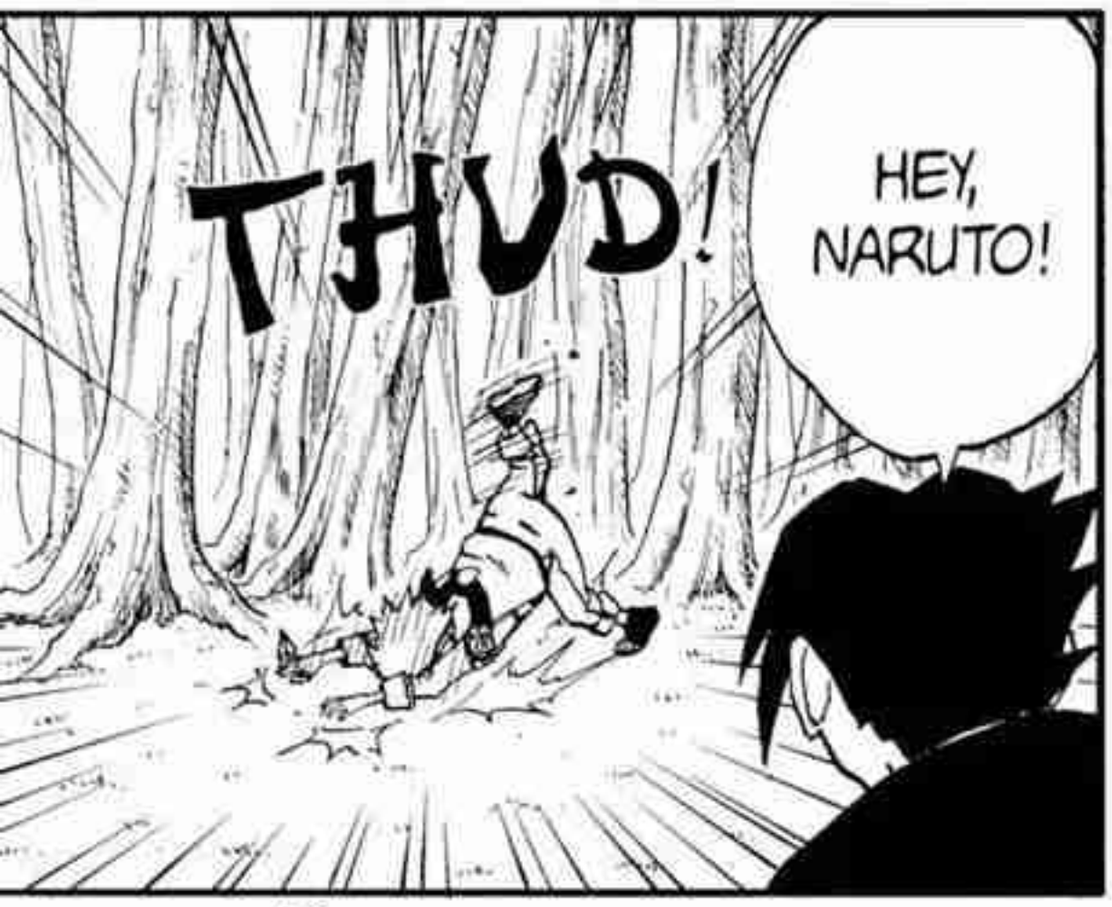


RATTLE
RATTLE
I NEED TOTAL CONCEN-TRATION.
HEY... WAIT A MINUTE!
I CAN'T LET SASUKE DISTRACT ME.

DARN IT--!
THUK

YOU'RE HOPELESS!
HEY! SAKURA! COULD YOU HELP ME GET THE HANG OF THIS?

TAKE IT EASY. RELAX AND FOCUS ON THE TREE UNTIL YOU CAN FEEL HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE ENERGY YOU'LL NEED TO CENTER IN THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET.
NOW, PAY ATTENTION. IT TAKES MENTAL ENERGY TO GENERATE AND MANIPULATE CHAKRA, SO IF YOU GET ALL STRESSED OUT OR DISTRACTED, YOU CAN'T DO IT.


THUD!
HEY, NARUTO!

THIS TIME FOR SURE!

RIGHT! FOCUS. CONCENTRATE. I CAN DO THAT. I KNOW I CAN!

UHHH... WELL....
...

YOU'RE BREAKING MY CONCEN-TRATION! STOP BUGGING ME!
WANNA FIGHT?
YOU... YOU... YOU--!!
WHAT??

WHY'S HE WANT TO TALK TO ME ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WH-... WHAT? WHAT IS IT?

!?

WHAT DID SAKURA SAY TO YOU...?
WH...

...
SHH

OW!
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

YEAH!!!

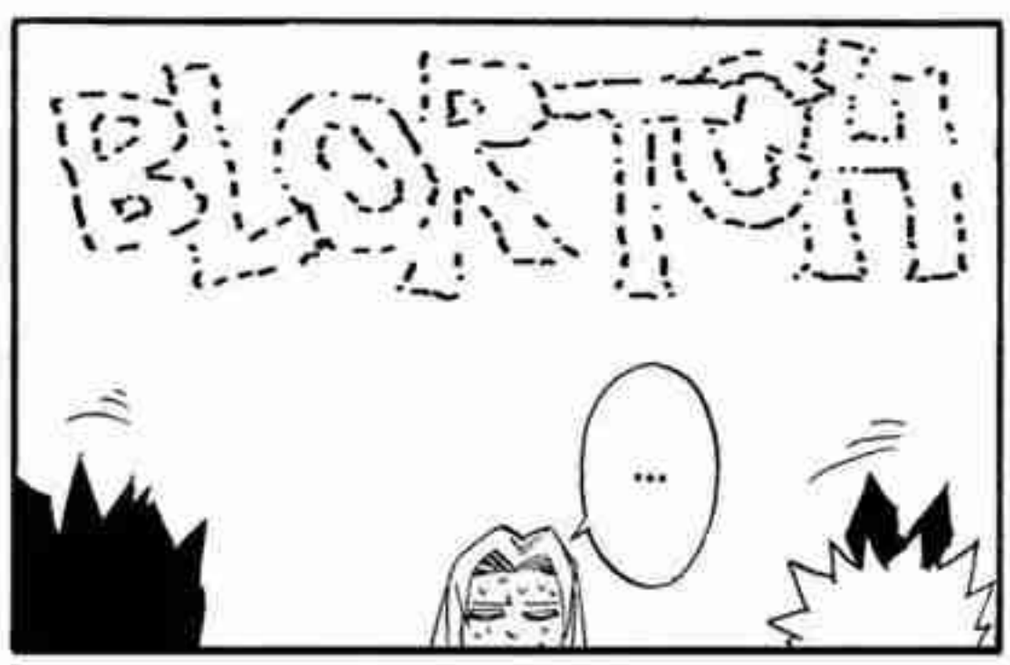
MUNCH
MUNCH

MUNCH
GULP

I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I SHARED A MEAL WITH SO MANY PEOPLE!!
BOY, THIS IS REAL FUN!
KLAT
KLAT

ULP..!
?

MORE, PLEASE!
SHF
SHF
SCOW
SCOW
!

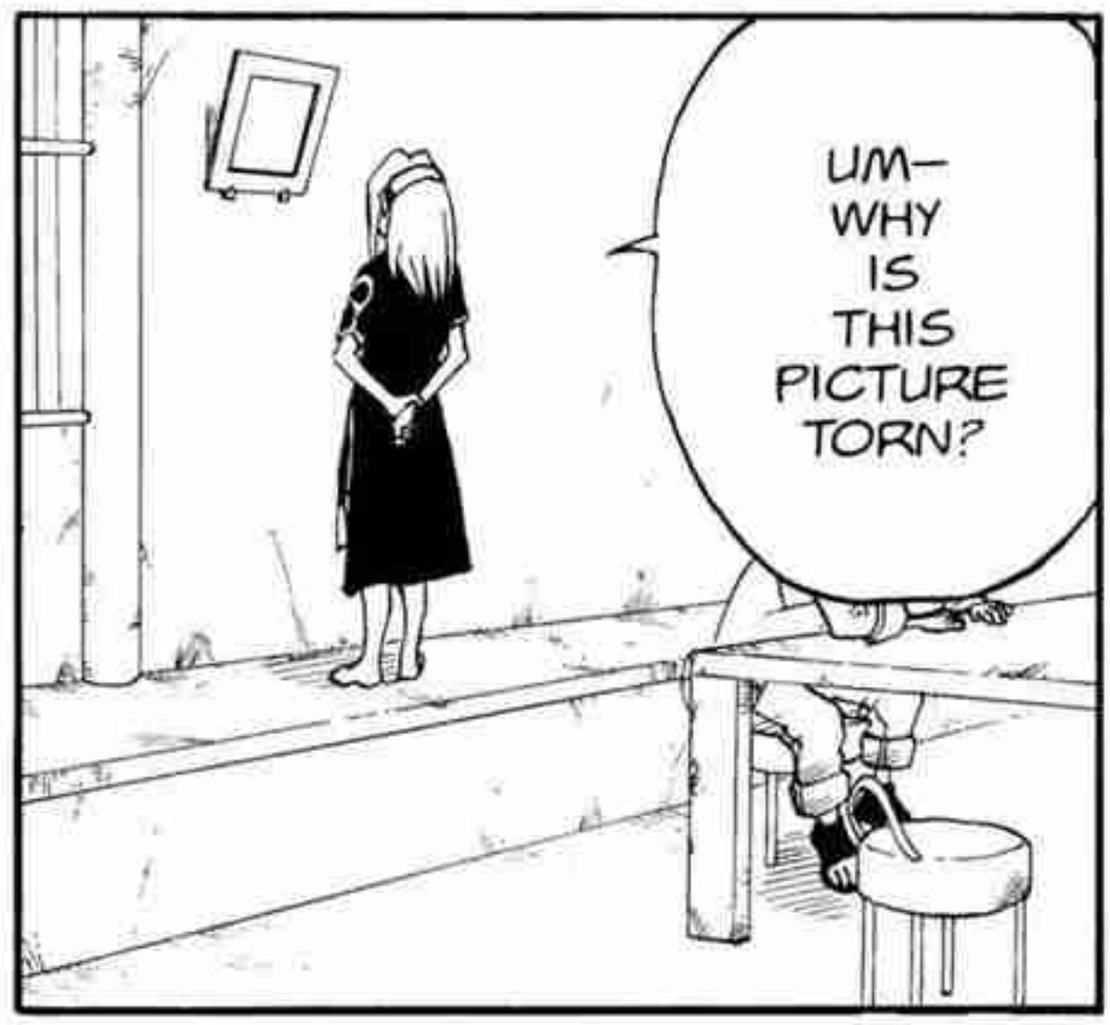

BLORTCH
...

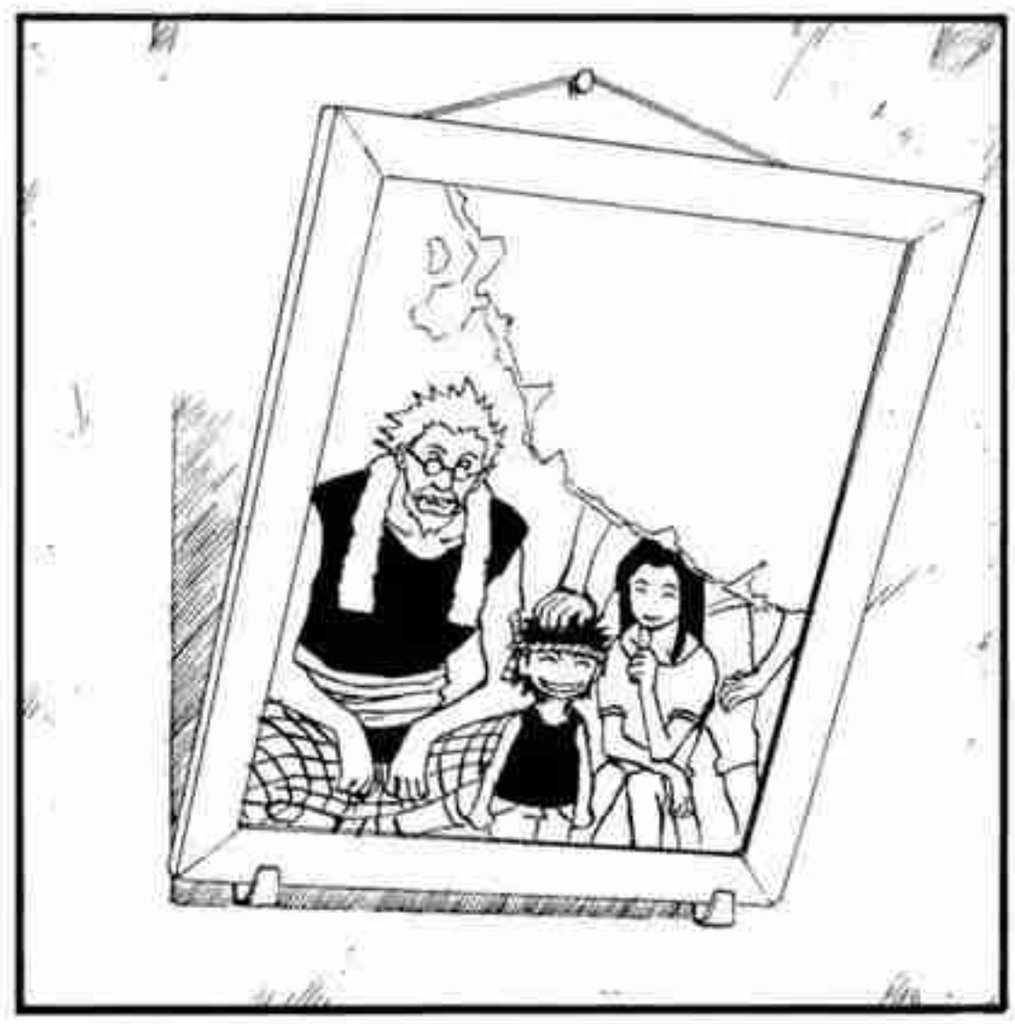
... NO, I WANNA EAT!

STOP EATING IF YOU'RE JUST GONNA HURL IT BACK UP!
SMAK
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

WHATEVER IT TAKES!
THROWING UP, HOWEVER, IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SITUATION...♡

BECAUSE EVEN IF WE MAKE OURSELVES SICK TO DO IT, WE HAVE TO EAT IF WE WANT TO GET STRONG!
HEH...


UM— WHY IS THIS PICTURE TORN?



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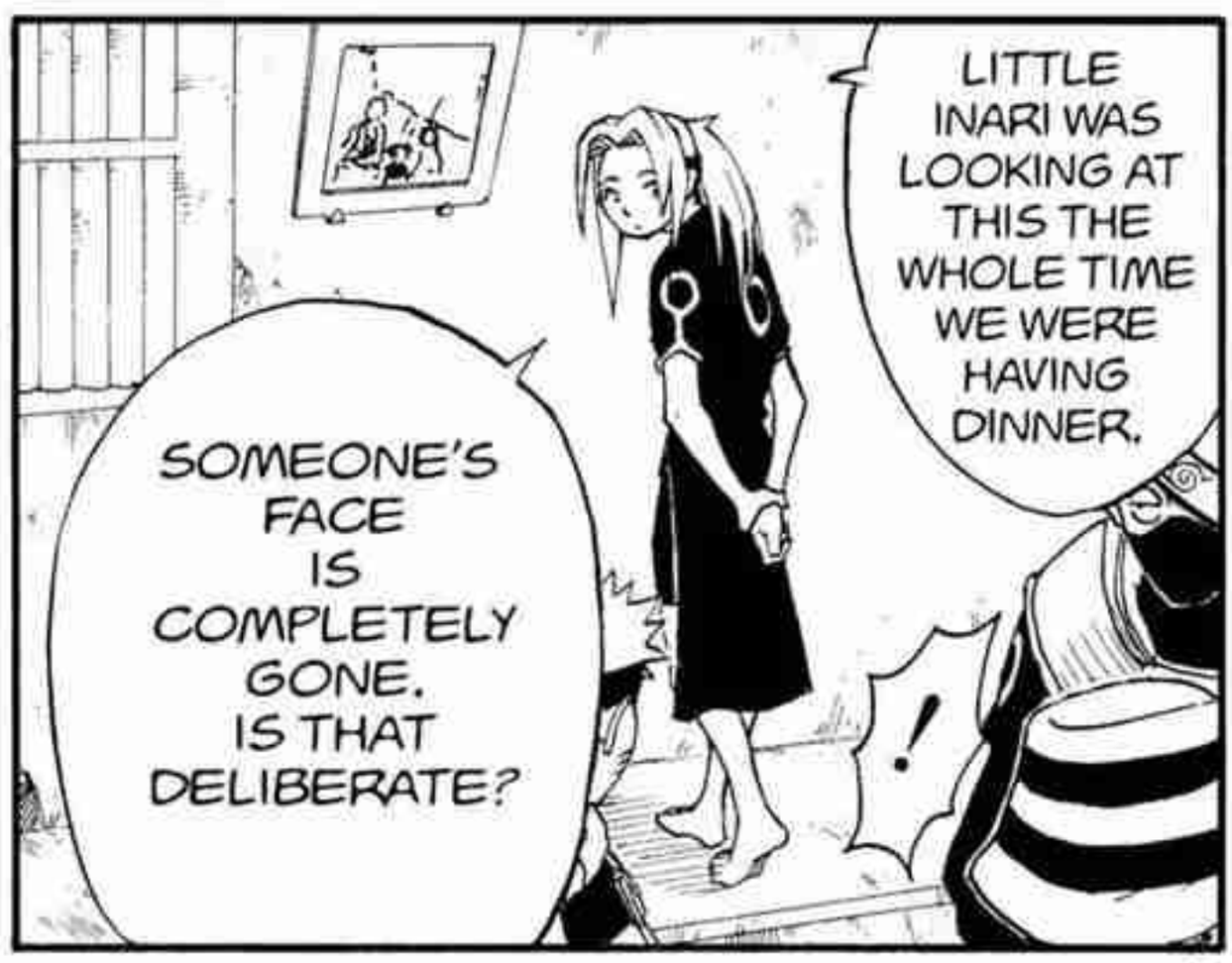
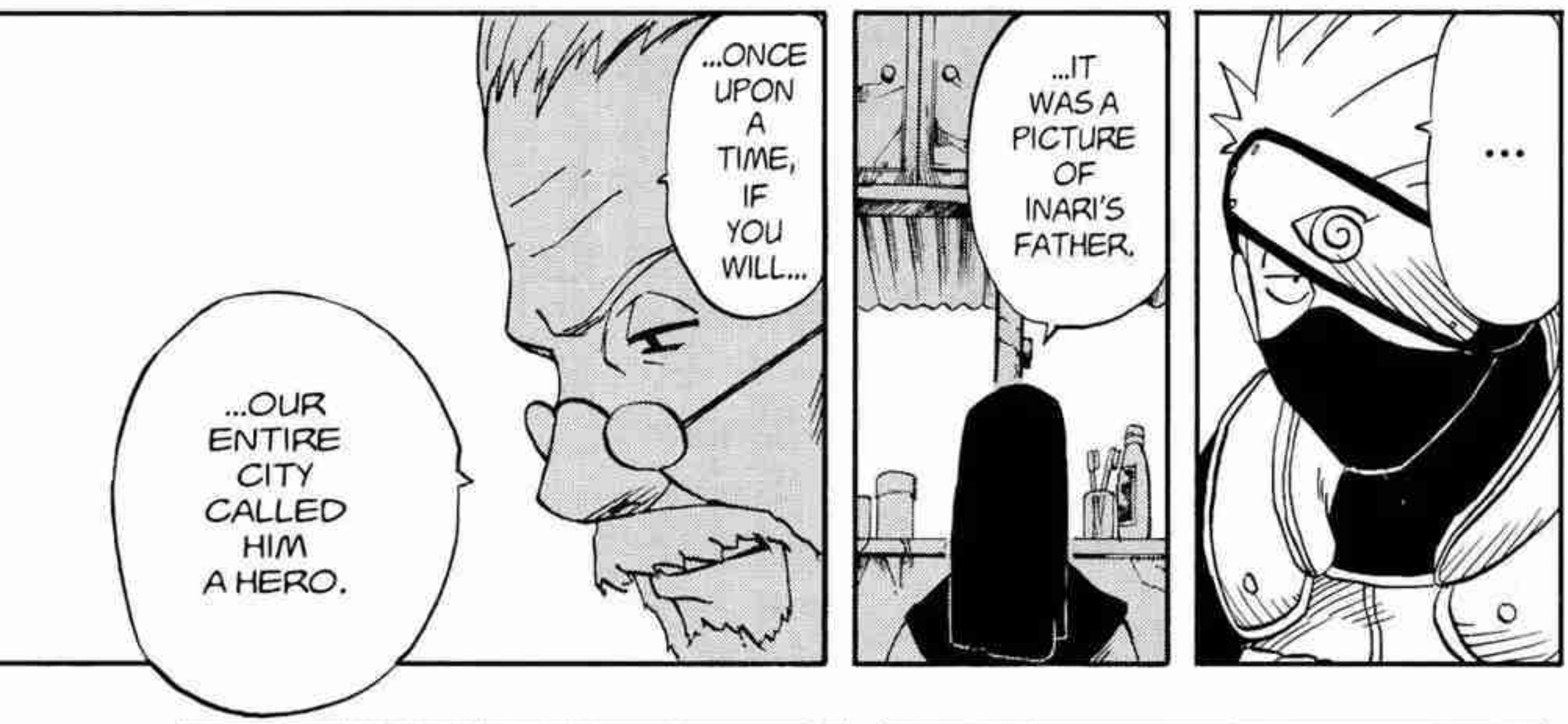

LITTLE INARI WAS LOOKING AT THIS THE WHOLE TIME WE WERE HAVING DINNER.
SOMEONE'S FACE IS COMPLETELY GONE. IS THAT DELIBERATE?
!


...ONCE UPON A TIME, IF YOU WILL...
...OUR ENTIRE CITY CALLED HIM A HERO.
...IT WAS A PICTURE OF INARI'S FATHER.
...

SHHF

SHOVE

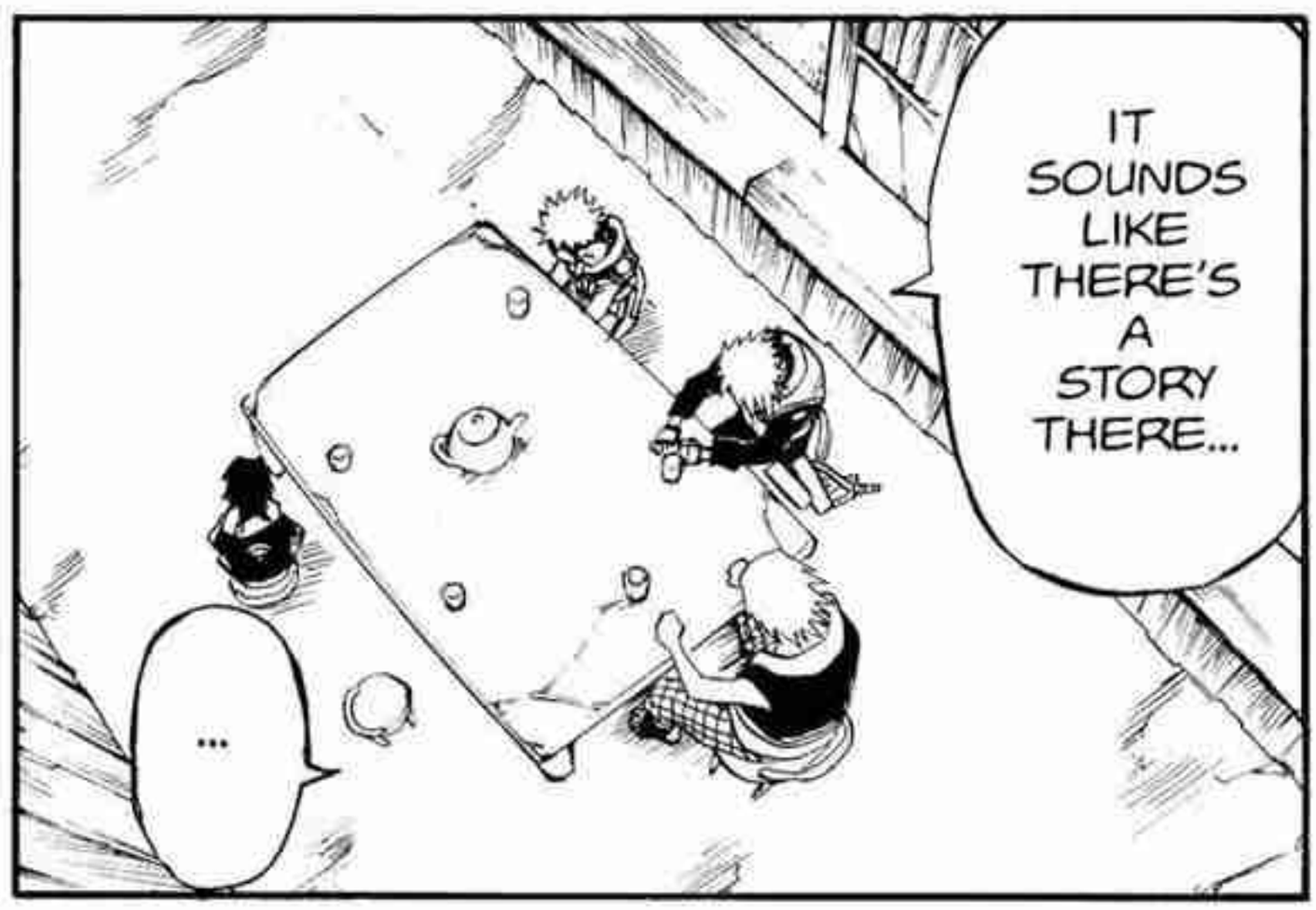
INARI!

SLAM!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
INARI! ...

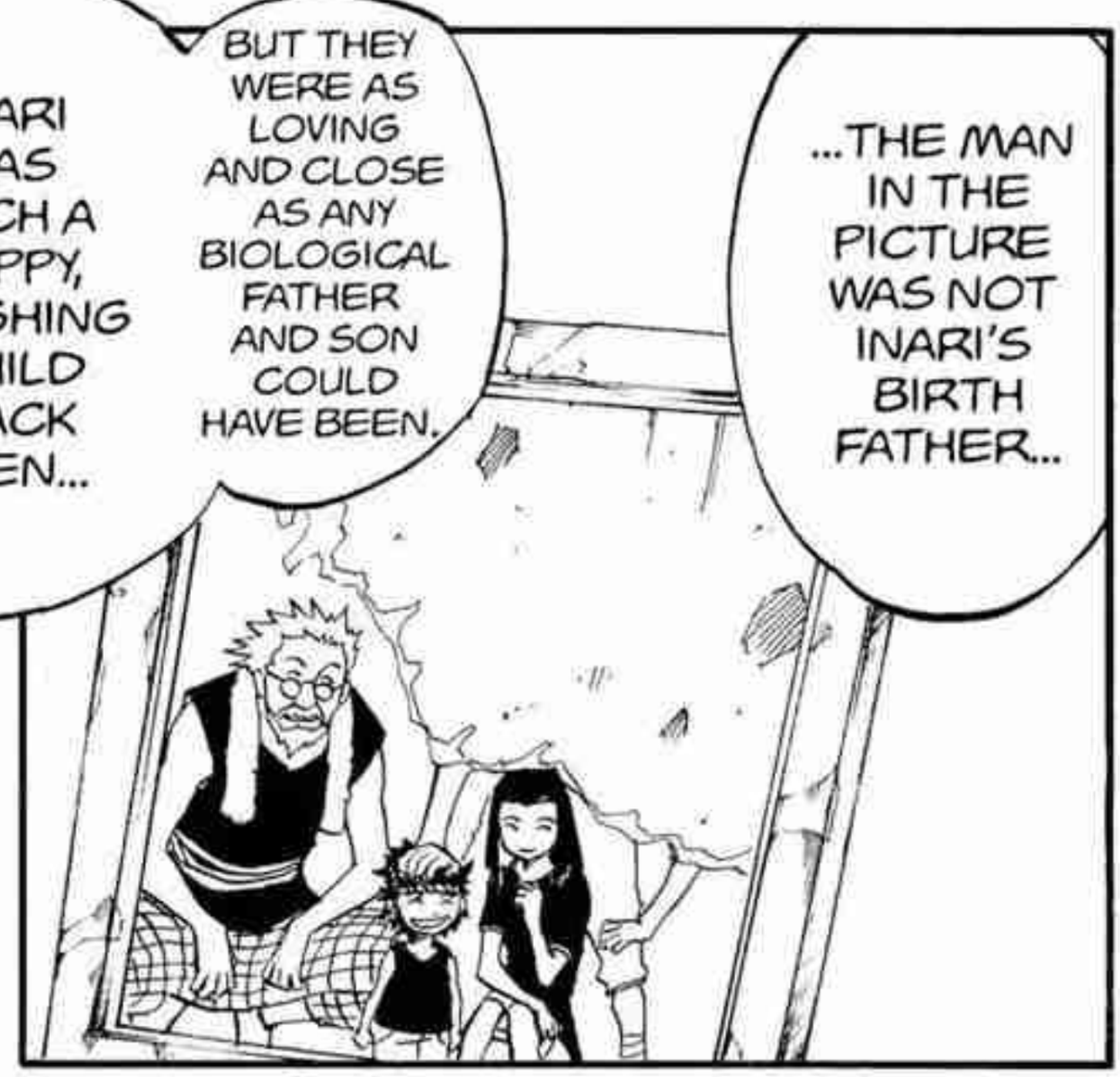
SLAM

FATHER! I'VE TOLD YOU TIME AND AGAIN NOT TO MENTION THAT IN FRONT OF MY SON!!

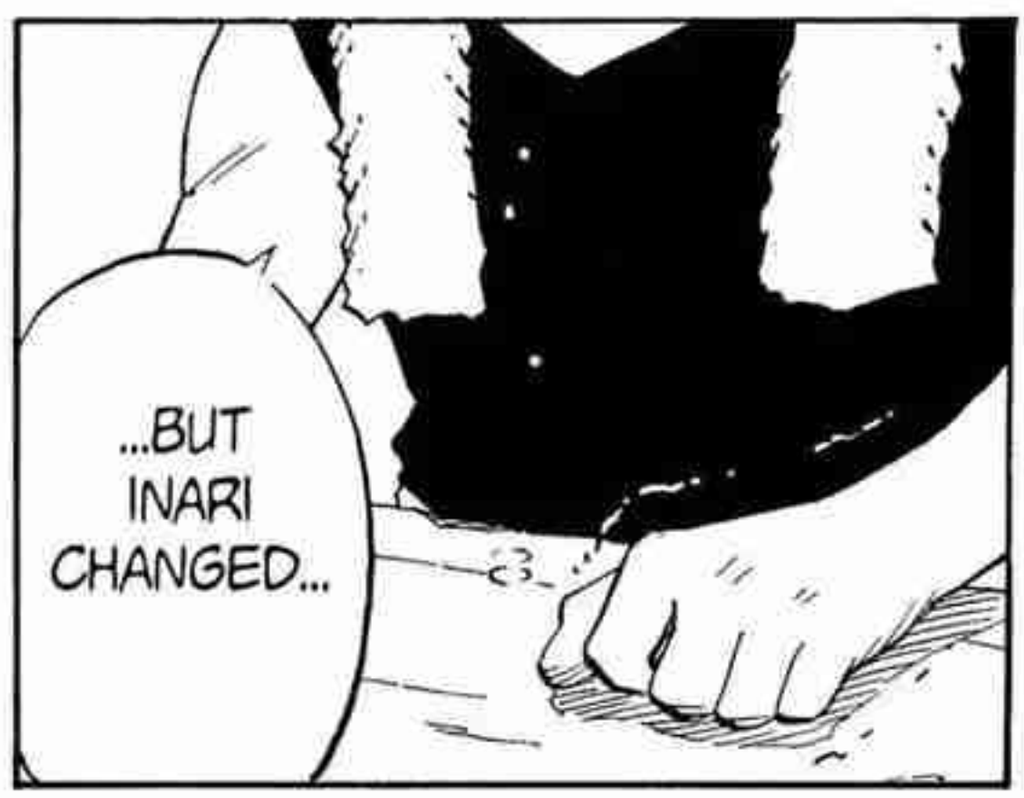

IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S A STORY THERE...
...

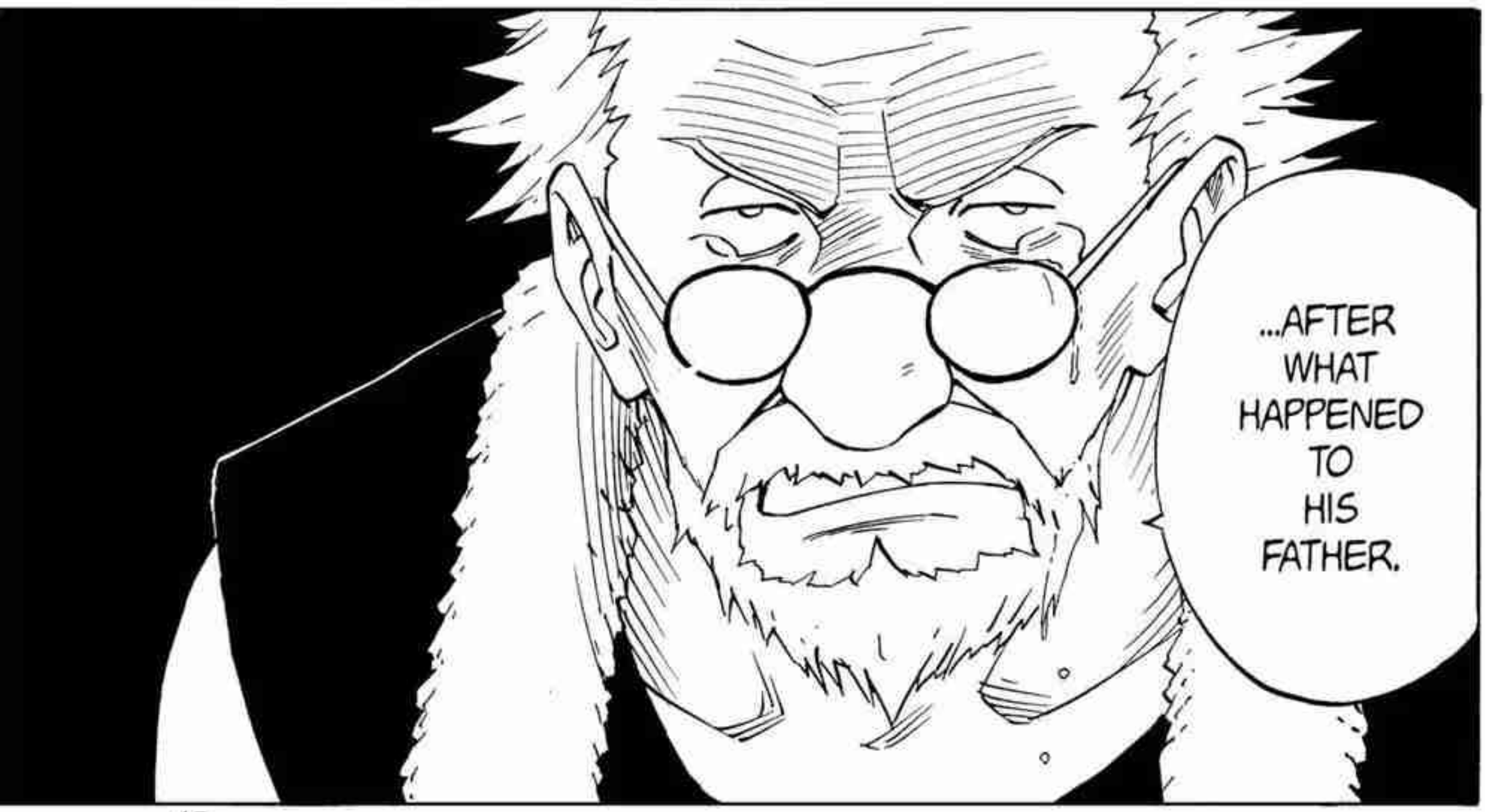
...
SO... YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT IS THAT MAKES INARI ACT SO STRANGELY...?

INARI WAS SUCH A HAPPY, LAUGHING CHILD BACK THEN...
BUT THEY WERE AS LOVING AND CLOSE AS ANY BIOLOGICAL FATHER AND SON COULD HAVE BEEN.


...THE MAN IN THE PICTURE WAS NOT INARI'S BIRTH FATHER...

SOB
SOB
?

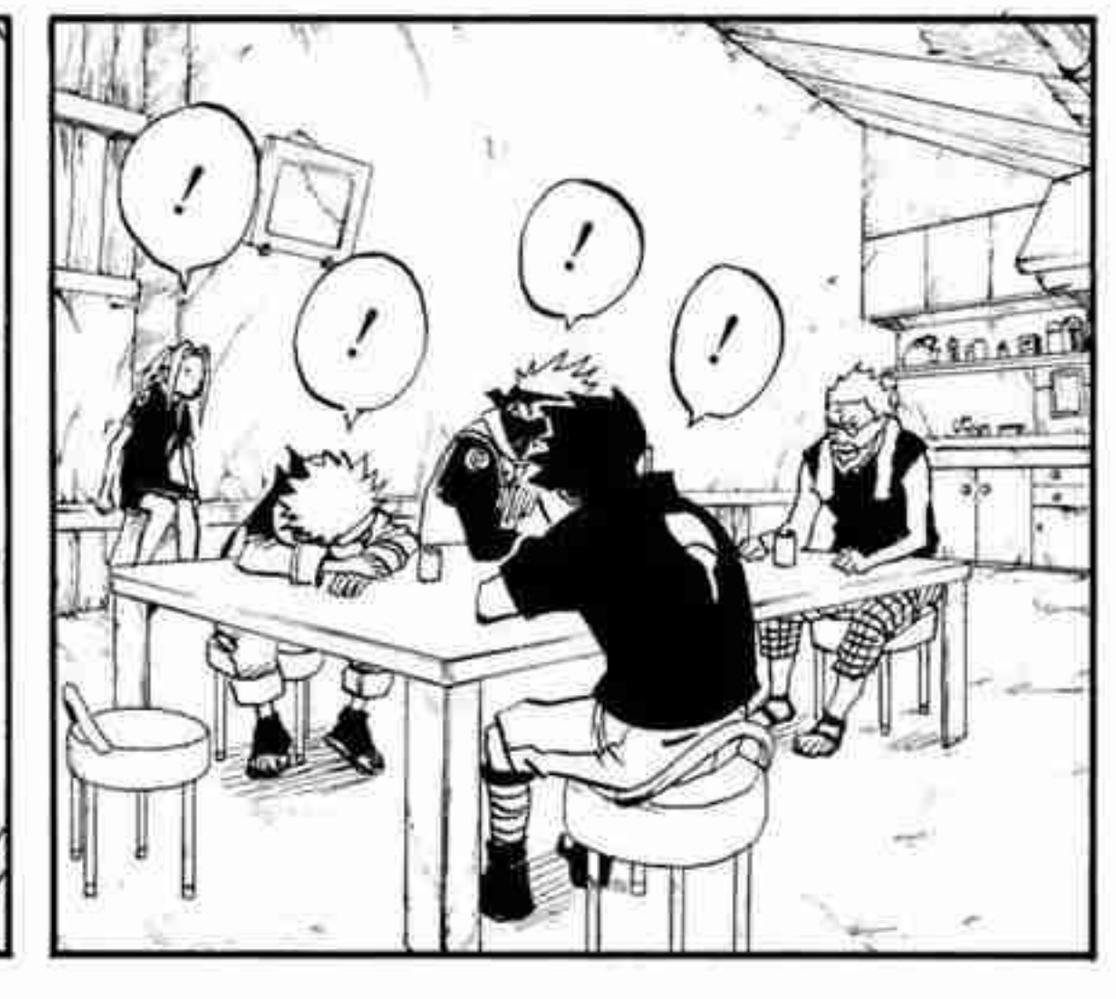

...BUT INARI CHANGED...


...AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS FATHER.

Number 20:
The Land That Had a Hero...!!

...BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.

OUR PEOPLE - AND ESPECIALLY LITTLE INARI - WERE ROBBED OF THE VERY MEANING OF COURAGE...



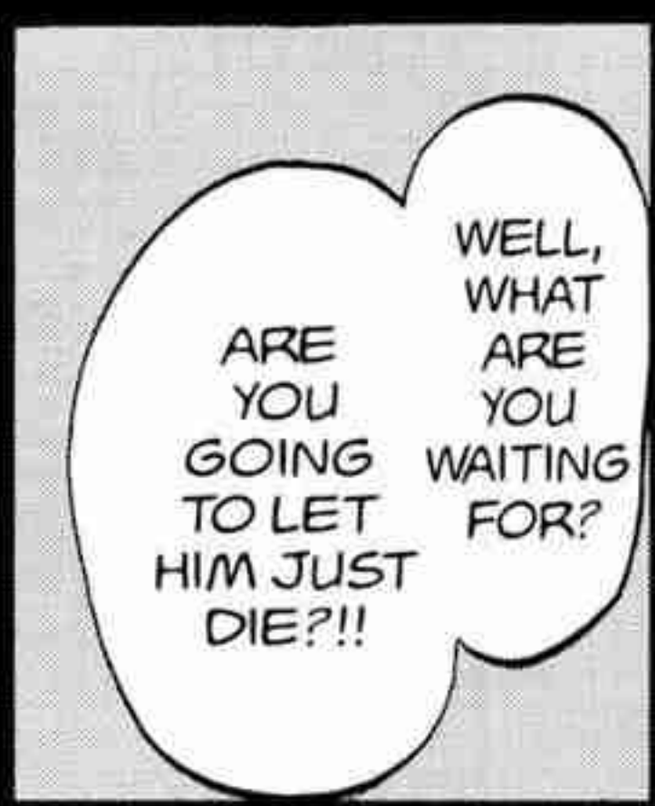
...THAT INARI AND THE MAN FIRST MET.
HERE, POOCHIE!!
IT WAS ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO...
POOCHIE'S MY FRIEND!
RRRR!
GIVE HIM BACK!!
YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM!!
HE'S NOT A SHOOTING STAR!! THAT'S MY POOCHIE!!
NOT ANY MORE! STARTING NOW, HIS NAME IS SHOOTING STAR... AND HE BELONGS TO ME!!
NYAA!
SLASH
...
SHUT UP--!!
PLOP
WOOF!?
HAH!

SPLASH
SPLASH
POOCHIE--!!
YIPE! YIPE!

SLOOSH
!!

WHO CARES ABOUT A DUMB DOG, ANYWAY?
IT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR NOT HANDING HIM OVER WHEN I ORDERED.

... BETTER GO SAVE HIM!!
WELL, IF THE PUPPY MEANS SO MUCH TO YOU...


ARE YOU GOING TO LET HIM JUST DIE?!!
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

BUT...

YOU CAN'T JUST DROWN MY DOG!
HEY!! LET INARI GO!
SPLASH

SPLASH
SPLASH
BUT... BUT...

POOCHIE'S MY BEST FRIEND!!
OF COURSE NOT!!!

HEY!! IF YOU OWN HIM, WHY AREN'T YOU DIVING IN?
TAK

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SWIM...!!
I'M SORRY, POOCHIE...

SHUDDER
SHUDDER

GAKK--!
H-HELP! HELP ME!

SPLASH
THIS AIN'T RIGHT, AKANE. WHAT IF HE CAN'T SWIM?

AAGGH!
BOOT

GLUB!!

OR DO YOU WANT TO BE THE NEXT ONE PERFORMING A LITTLE PET RESCUE?

B-... BUT...

AW, JUST LEAVE HIM!

P...POOCHIE--?!

FLAP

FLOP

WOOF!!

!

PADDLE

PADDLE

SPLASH

I-I DON'T WANNA DIE...

S-SOME-BODY, HELP...!!

P-POOCHIE--!!

NECESSITY, AND THE NEARNESS OF HIS OWN DEATH FINALLY TAUGHT POOCHIE HOW TO DOG PADDLE...

P-P-P--!!!

BUT, I DIGRESS...

hum-de-dum

SPLASH

WOOF!
SHOOTING STAR'S GETTING AWAY. GO AFTER HIM!!!
SHAKE
SHAKE

WHAT--!!
SHAKE
SHAKE

I'M...
THIS IS IT...
DYING...
GLUB
I-...IT HURTS
GLUB
OHH...

POOCHIE--!!

PUPPY

GLEAM

!!
ARE YOU AWAKE, SON?
MMMF

KRACKLE
KRACKLE
I REALLY LET THOSE PUNKS WHO WERE PICKING ON YOU HAVE IT GOOD.
HERE, EAT!

...YOU'VE HAD A PRETTY ROUGH TIME OF IT, HAVEN'T YOU?!
DID YOU... RESCUE ME, MISTER?!

NO... MAYBE NOT...
...GOD?
...

SLURP
WELL, I GUESS, SINCE YOU LET HIM DOWN FIRST, WE REALLY SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD ON HIM.
...!...

...EVEN YOUR DOG LET YOU DOWN. WHERE I COME FROM, DOGS ARE LOYAL. YOU CAN COUNT ON THEM. BUT...
MUNCH
MUNCH

...

!
I WAS TOO SCARED TO EVEN MOVE.
SNIFF

BUT... I GUESS I WASN'T BRAVE ENOUGH.
I WANTED TO RESCUE HIM...
BUT KEEP IN MIND, SON...
PAT
...OF COURSE NOT... ANY KID YOUR AGE WOULD HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED.
PAT

?
...WHEN YOU DO BECOME A MAN, YOU HAVE TO WALK A ROAD THAT WON'T LEAVE YOU FILLED WITH REGRETS.
HUH...?

...AND PROTECT IT WITH ALL THE STRENGTH YOU'VE GOT, EVEN AT THE RISK OF YOUR OWN LIFE!

FLEX

NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL OR HOW HARD IT SEEMS, NO MATTER WHAT IT MAY COST YOU, YOU HAVE TO HANG IN THERE...

IF SOMETHING IS PRECIOUS TO YOU...

WOW!

YEAH!!

OKAY... I GUESS IT DOES SOUND A LITTLE CORNY, HUNH?

RIGHT?!

IT'D BE LIKE YOUR LEGACY...

IF YOU DO THAT, THEN EVEN IF YOU DIE IN THE ATTEMPT, AT LEAST THE WORLD WILL BE LEFT WITH THE PROOF THAT A MAN WORTH LIVING HAD DIED!

FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, INARI'S AFFECTION AND ADMIRATION FOR KAIZA GREW AND GREW.
YANK
YANK
HIS NAME WAS KAIZA. HE WAS A FISHERMAN WHO CAME HERE FROM ABROAD TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE.
HEY! I FINALLY GOT A SMILE OUT OF YOU! NOW EAT. EAT!
OH!
IN NO TIME AT ALL, KAIZA WAS LIKE ONE OF THE FAMILY.
IT PROBABLY HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH INARI'S REAL FATHER HAVING DIED BEFORE THE BOY WAS OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER HIM, BUT EVEN SO... THAT BOY STUCK TO KAIZA LIKE WHITE ON RICE.
THEY WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER, LIKE ANY OTHER FATHER AND SON.
HOW IS IT GOING, YOU TWO?
I-...IT'S TERRIBLE!! KAIZA, THE RAIN'S SO HEAVY, IT'S OVERFLOWED THE RIVERBANKS AND FORCED OPEN ALL OF THE LOCKS!!
SLAM
PITTER PITTER
AND HE WAS JUST THE KIND OF MAN THIS TOWN NEEDS MORE OF!

DADDY!!

WHAT?!!
AT THIS RATE, ALL OF SECTOR D WILL BE FLOODED!!

RRRUMBLE

INARI, GO TO THE BACK AND GET THE ROPES!
OKAY!

I'LL GO!
THE LONGER WE WAIT, THE WORSE IT WILL GET... AND SECTOR D IS RUNNING OUT OF TIME!

IMPOSSIBLE! HOW WOULD WE GET A ROPE AROUND IT IN THE FIRST PLACE!! ANYONE WHO GOES INTO THAT TORRENT WILL BE SWEPT AWAY AND DROWNED!!
THIS IS AWFUL—THE ONLY WAY WE COULD POSSIBLY GET THIS LOCK CLOSED IS IF WE PUT A ROPE AROUND THE ENTIRE BARRIER AND PULL IT, BUT...

KAIZA!!

PAT!

DON'T WORRY, INARI... DADDY CAN DO ANYTHING!
DADDY!!
TAK

DON'T RISK IT!
YOU'LL BE THROWING YOUR LIFE AWAY!!
IT CAN'T BE DONE, MAN!!

SKFF

BECAUSE HE LOVES THE CITY WHERE HIS LITTLE BOY LIVES!

KAIZA!!

LEAP

EVEN AT THE RISK...

PROTECT IT WITH ALL THE STRENGTH YOU'VE GOT...

IF SOMETHING IS PRECIOUS TO YOU.....

SOL 4S

PULL EVERYONE. PULL!

HE'S DONE IT!!! THE ROPE'S IN PLACE!!

THAT WAS WHEN...

GO, DADDY...!!

...OF YOUR OWN LIFE!

READ THIS WAY
...UNTIL GATÔ CAME TO TOWN...
WITH A FATHER LIKE THAT, INARI COULD HOLD HIS HEAD UP HIGH.
... PEOPLE HERE STARTED CALLING KAIZA A CHAMPION AND A HERO.
!
...
...AND THE INCIDENT YOU'VE ALLUDED TO TOOK PLACE...
GATÔ HAD KAIZA PUT TO DEATH!
IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE CITY...
SO... WHAT HAPPENED?
SHUDDER
...
SHUDDER

HE'S OPENLY DENOUNCED OUR POLICIES AND TRIED TO INCITE SABOTAGE AND RESISTANCE AGAINST US, AND DISRUPTED THE ORDER OF THIS LAND. THE PENALTY FOR ALL HIS CRIMES IS DEATH. THE SENTENCE WILL BE CARRIED OUT AT ONCE...

UHHN

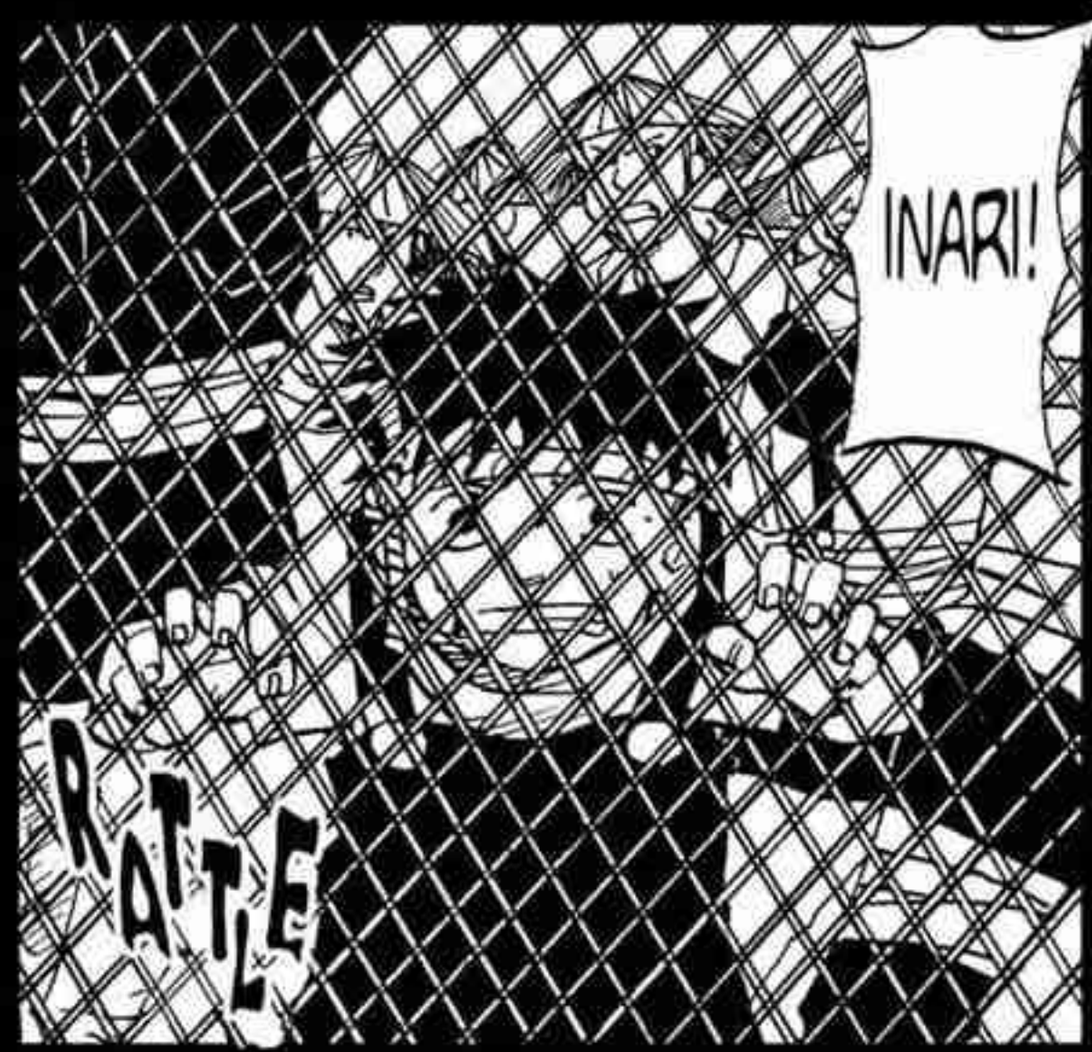
...

EVERYBODY LISTEN UP! THIS MAN HAS COMMITED ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM AGAINST MY COMPANY AND OUR ACTIVITIES HERE.

GASP

GASP

GASP



DADDY!!

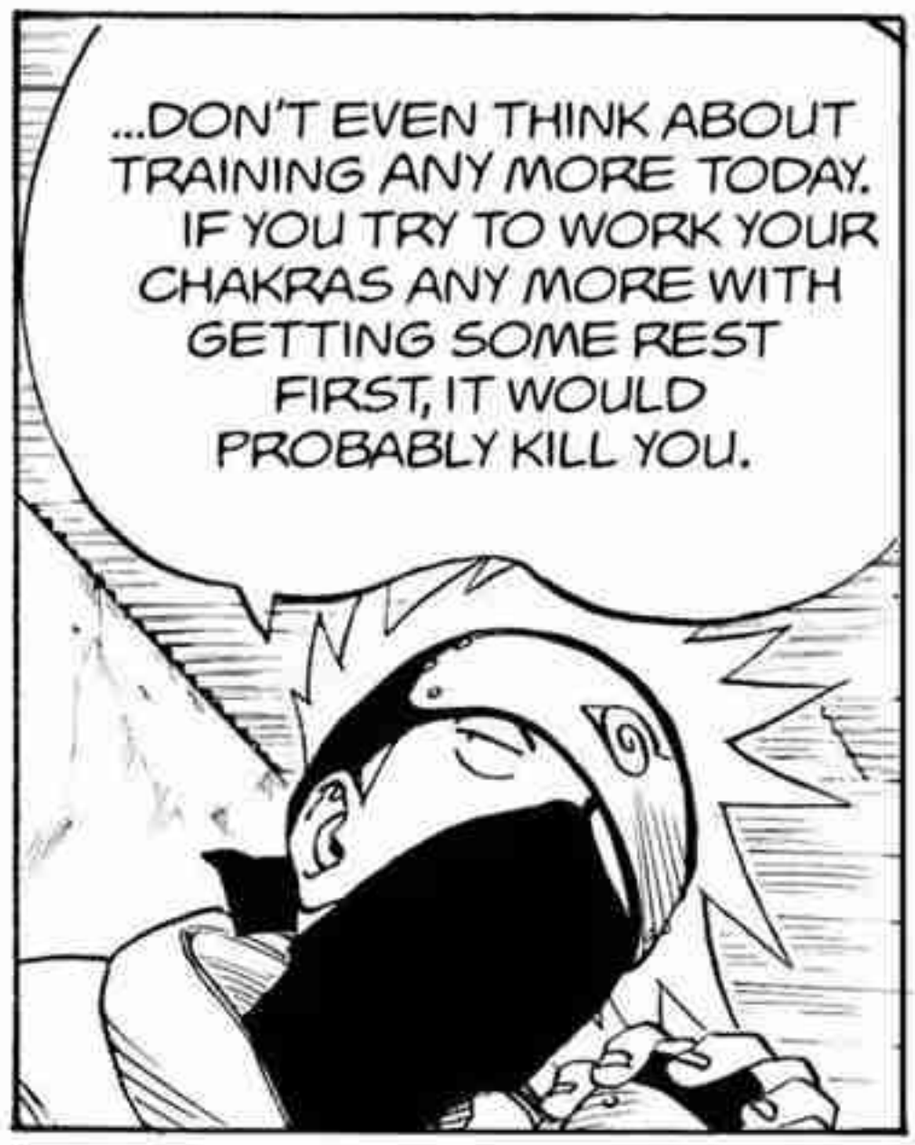
...TO ENSURE THAT SUCH AN AWFUL THING WILL NEVER DISTURB ANY OF US, EVER AGAIN!

DAD...!!
SHING
NOW!
HMMF
POK
...YOU'RE A LIAR!!
BUT... YOU PROMISED... YOU PROMISED TO PROTECT ME!
AND TSUNAMI... AND EVERYONE IN THE CITY'S CHANGED, TOO.
EVER SINCE THEN, INARI HAS CHANGED...

THERE'S NO SUCH THING!!!
"HERO"? YOU'RE DUMB!

CLATTER

SOB
SOB
...DADDY...


...DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT TRAINING ANY MORE TODAY. IF YOU TRY TO WORK YOUR CHAKRAS ANY MORE WITH GETTING SOME REST FIRST, IT WOULD PROBABLY KILL YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, NARUTO...?
!
SPLAT
OW!

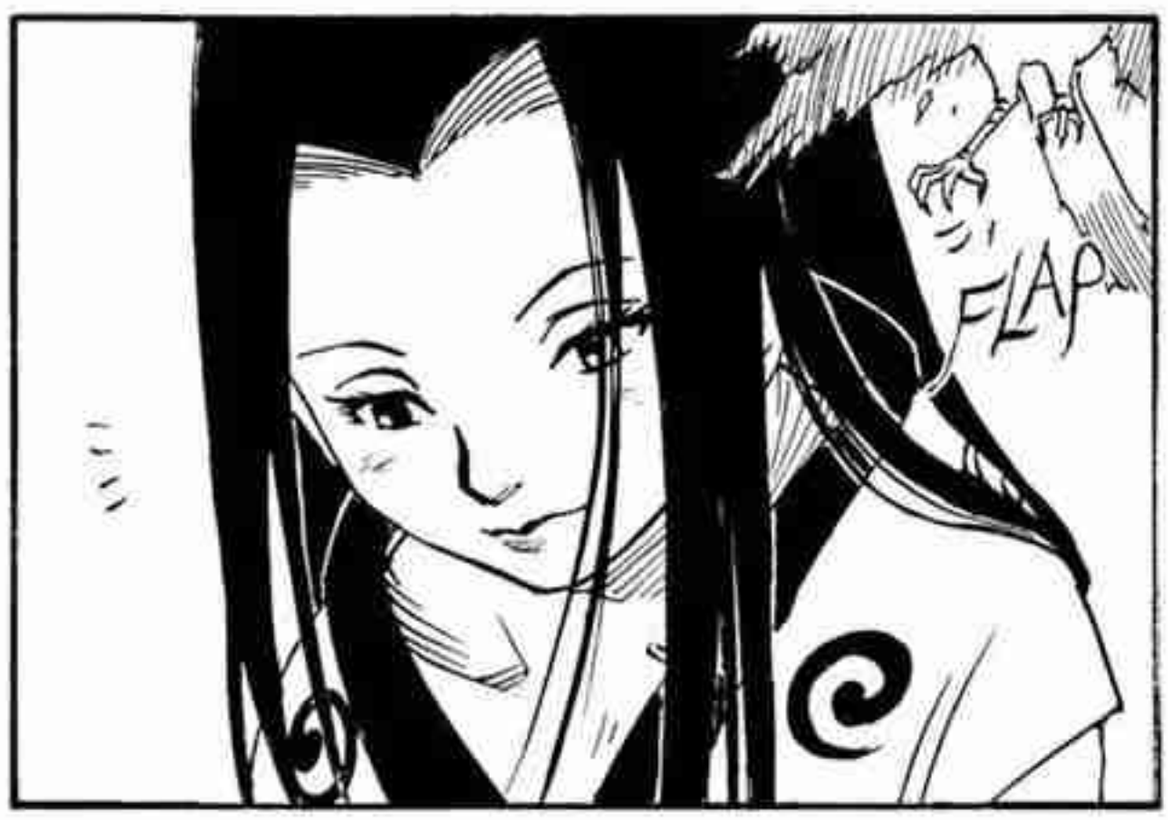
!

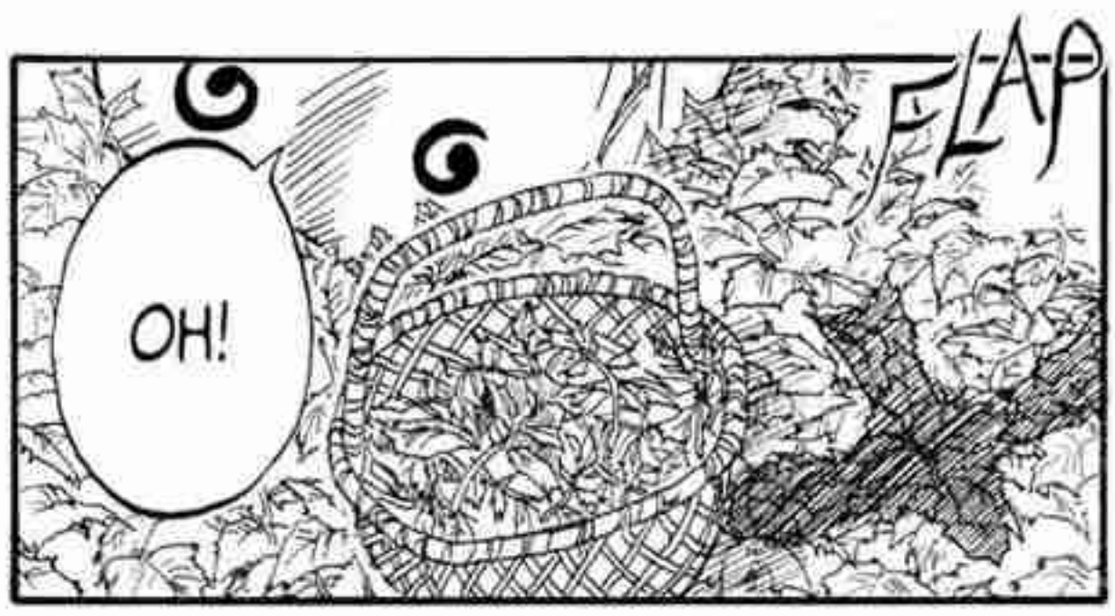
PROVE WHAT? TO WHOM?
?
I'M GOING TO PROVE TO HIM THAT HE'S WRONG!..
BAM
I'M GOING TO SHOW INARI... !
THAT THERE ARE STILL HEROES IN THE WORLD!!!

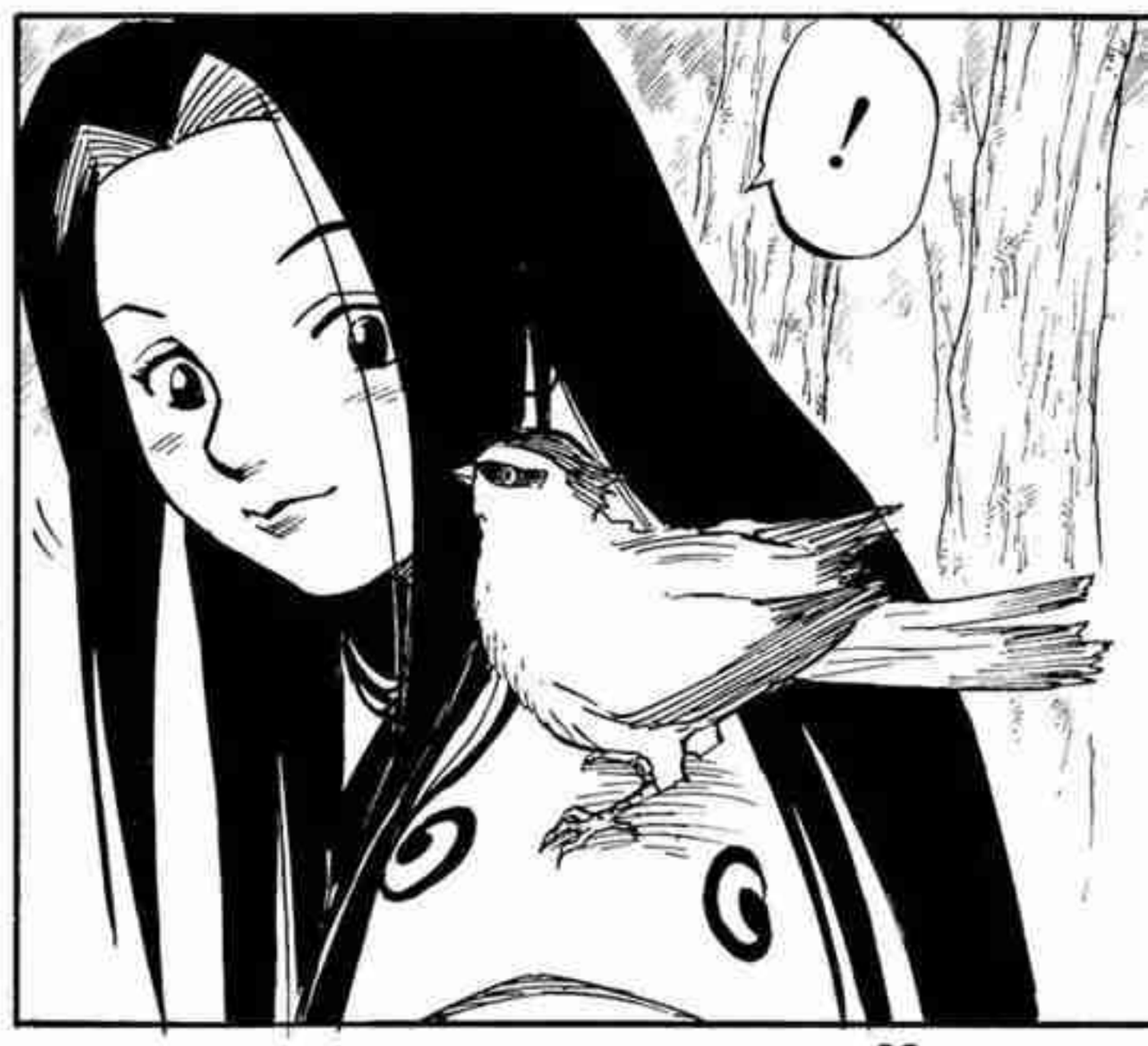
Number 21:
A Meeting in the Forest...!!
MORNING ON THE SIXTH DAY OF TRAINING...
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
ZZZZZZZZZZZ
ZZZZZZZZZZZ
TWEET
SSHF
FLUFF

TWEET
SNAP

TWEET
TWEET


FLAP


OH!
FLAP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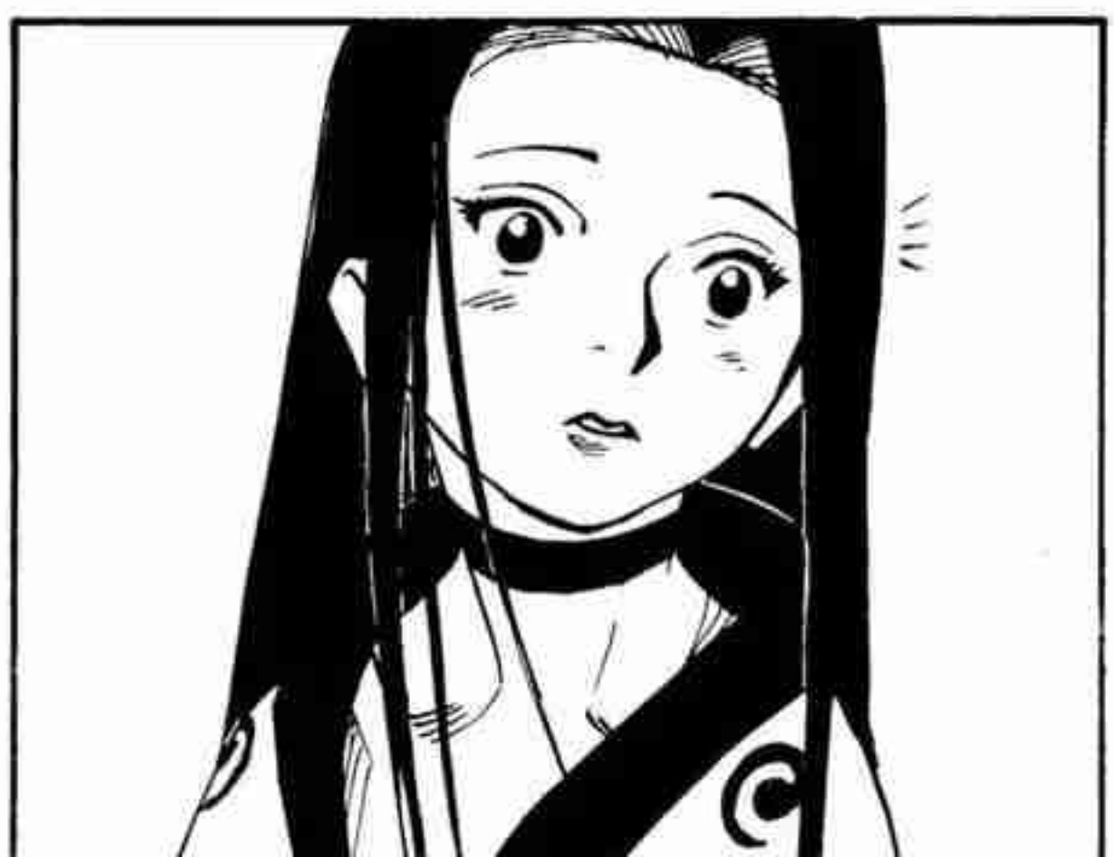


...

FLAP
PECK
PECK

!

FLOP
Grumble

TAK

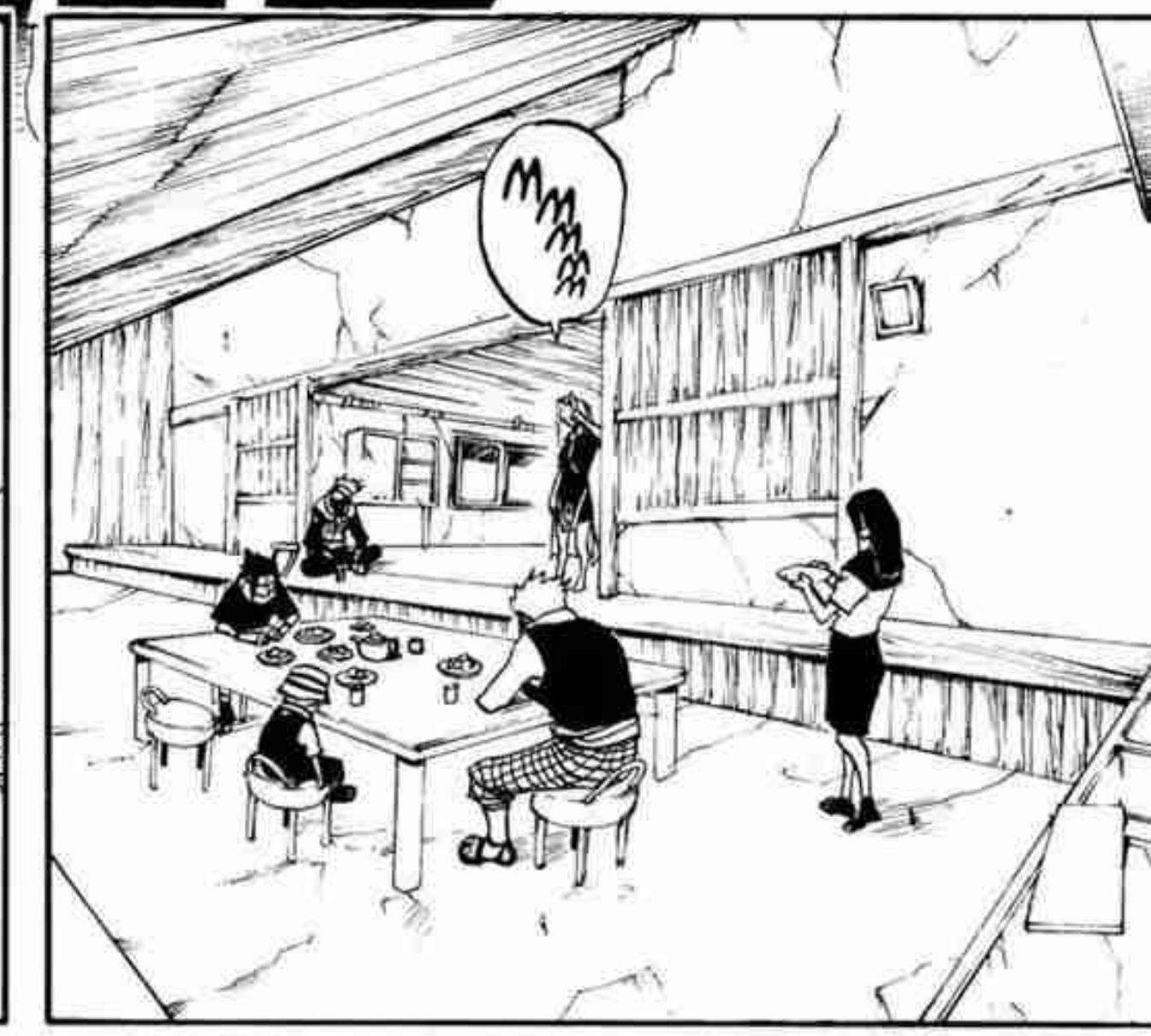
WHO ARE YOU?!!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!!

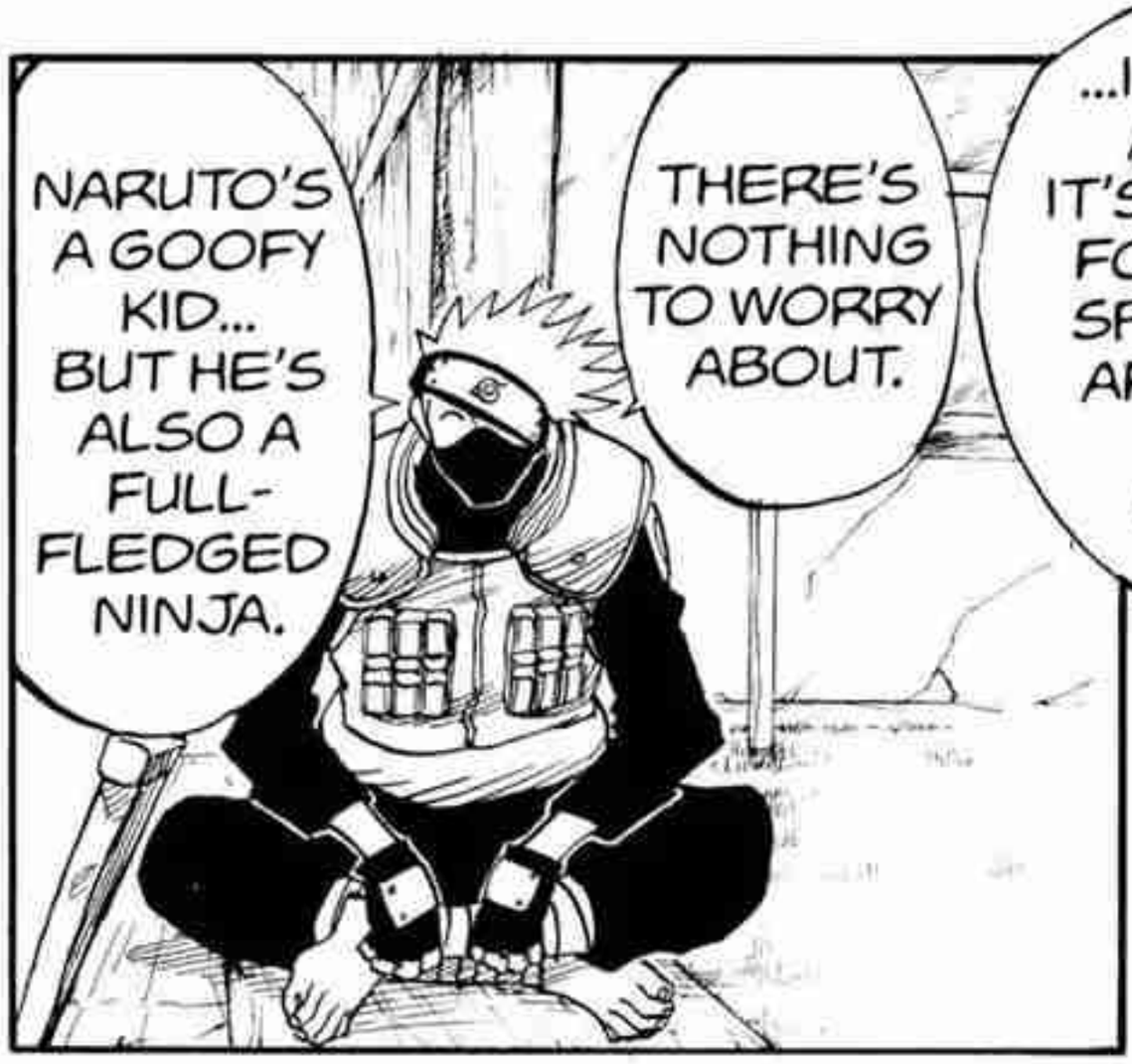
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP

SHF

-ハタ-
AAAN<-

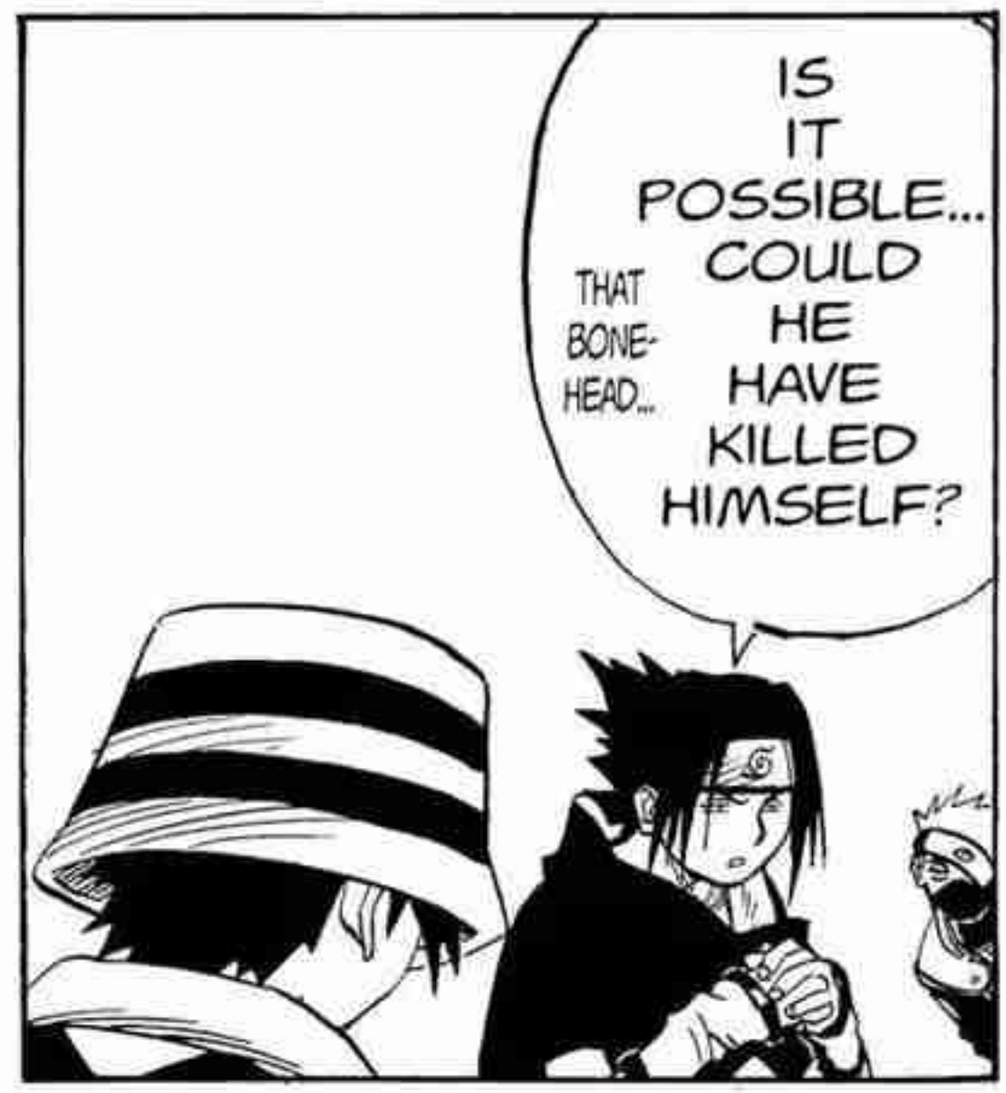
EVER SINCE YOU TOLD US THAT STORY, HE'S BEEN IN THE TREES, TRAINING ALL ALONE, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...
...AN IDIOT WITH AN OBSESSION!
NAUGHTY NARUTO STAYED OUT ALL NIGHT AGAIN, DIDN'T HE?


MMMM


NARUTO'S A GOOFY KID... BUT HE'S ALSO A FULL-FLEDGED NINJA.
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

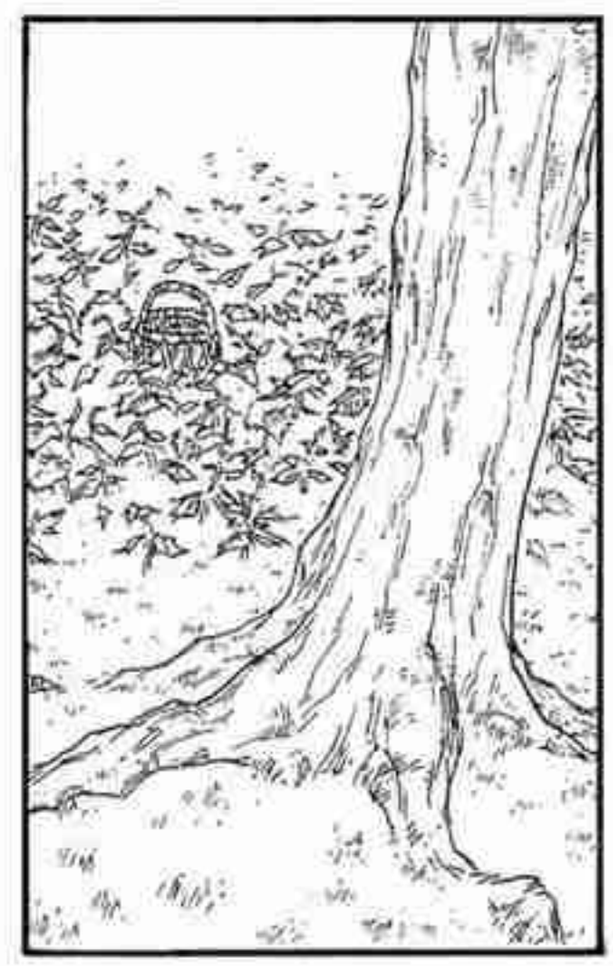
...I HOPE HE'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOT GOOD FOR A BOY TO SPEND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT ALONE OUTSIDE!
IF HE EXHAUSTS HIS CHAKRA, HE COULD KILL HIMSELF... AND BE LYING DEAD SOMEWHERE RIGHT NOW.

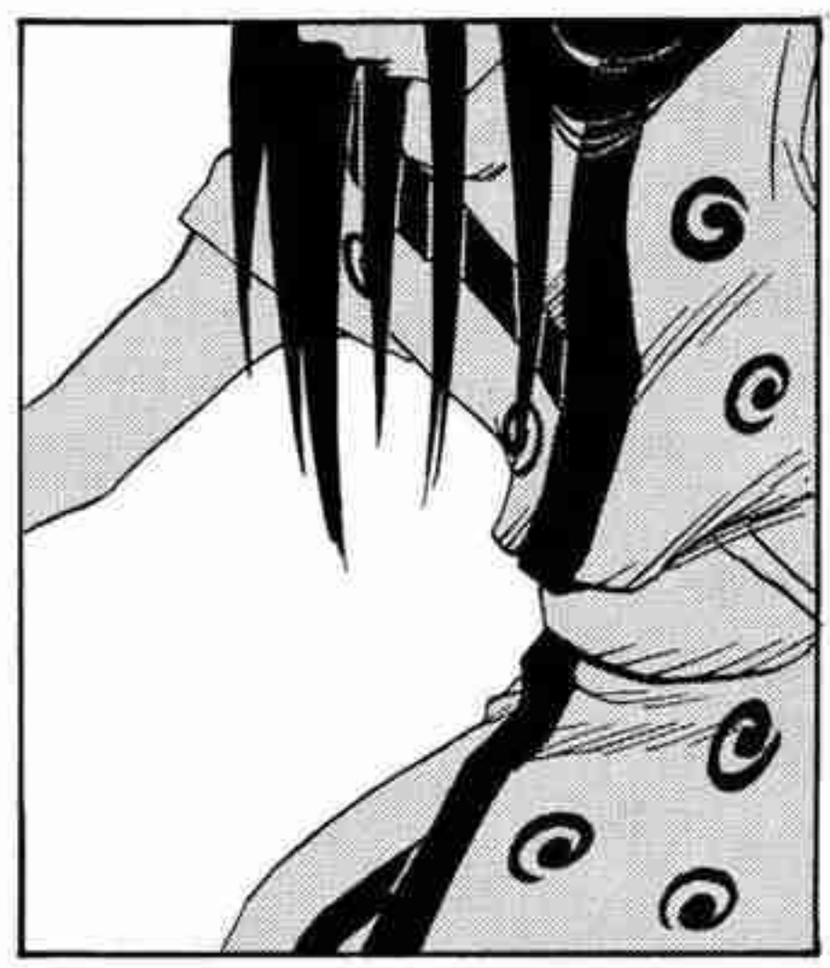
...


IS IT POSSIBLE... COULD HE HAVE KILLED HIMSELF?
THAT BONE-HEAD...

ZZZZ
ZZZZ

ZZZZ
ZZZZ

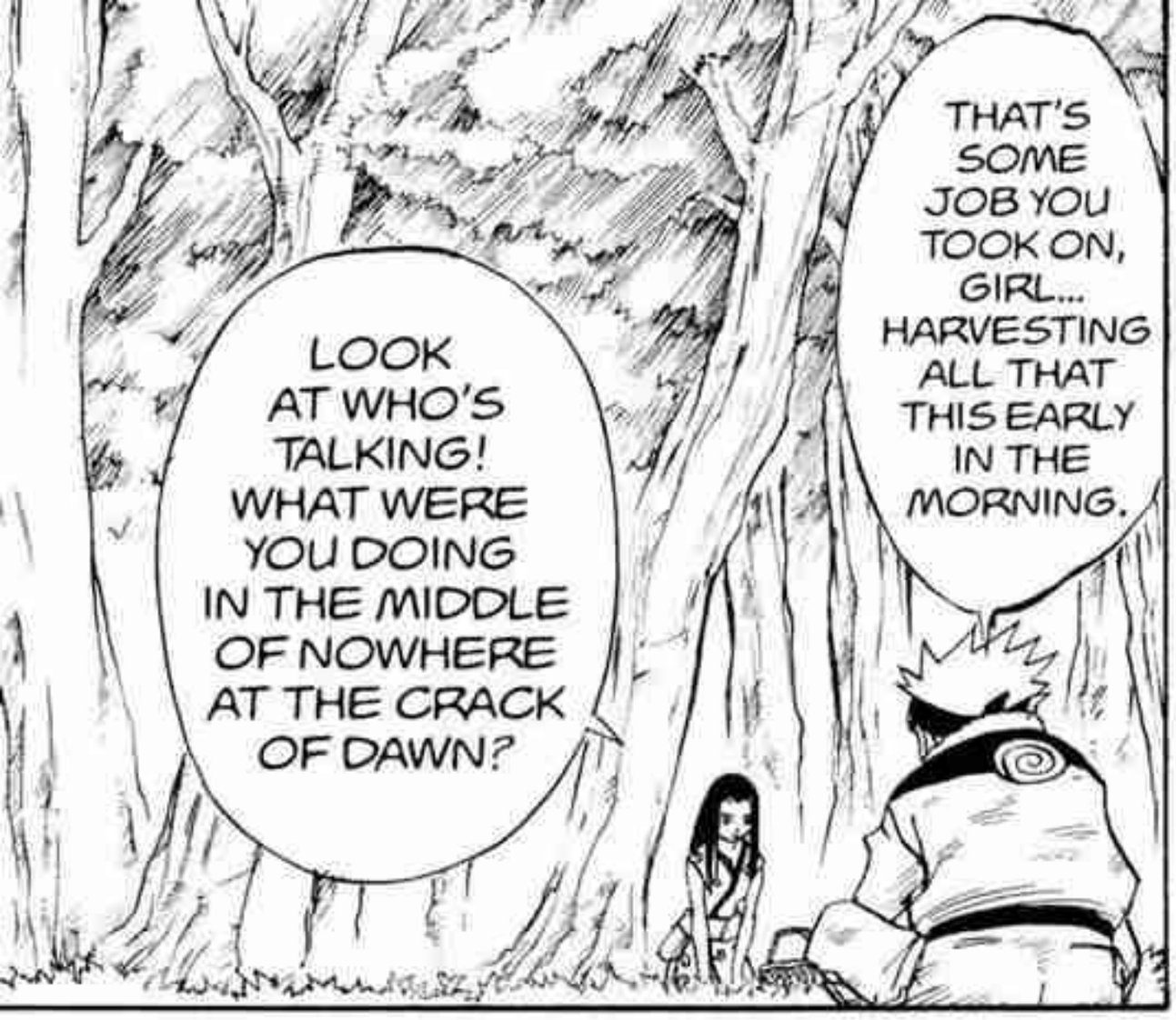




YOU'LL CATCH YOUR DEATH OF COLD, SLEEPING ON THE GROUND.

TAP

...HUNH?


LOOK AT WHO'S TALKING! WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE AT THE CRACK OF DAWN?
THAT'S SOME JOB YOU TOOK ON, GIRL... HARVESTING ALL THAT THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING.

I'M SORRY TO HAVE IMPOSED ON YOU.
ARE THESE GRASSES AND WEEDS REALLY MEDICINAL?

!
TRAINING!!
OMG
YEAH
WHY? DO YOU THINK I LOOK LIKE ONE? DO I? REALLY? BECAUSE I AM!
!!
PING!
REALLY? THAT HEADBAND YOU'RE WEARING... ARE YOU SOME KIND OF NINJA?
HEH HEH...
WOW— THAT'S INCREDIBLE!

TO BUILD UP MY STRENGTH.

WHAT ARE YOU TRAINING FOR?

..WHY...
BUT...

...

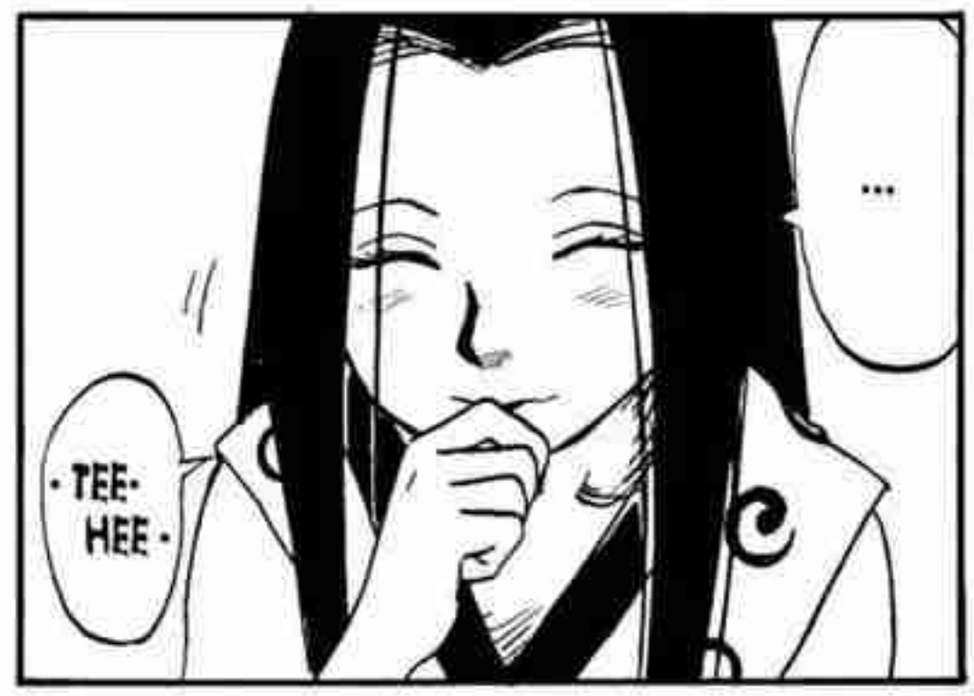
NOPE! WRONG!!
I NEED TO BE A LOT STRONGER THAN THIS!
BUT... BUT YOU LOOK SO STRONG AND MANLY ALREADY!

AND RIGHT AT THE MOMENT, I KIND OF HAVE TO PROVE A POINT... TO A CERTAIN PERSON I KNOW.
TO BECOME TOP DOG IN MY HOME TOWN!
ALL THE PEOPLE WHO USED TO TREAT ME LIKE DIRT WILL HAVE TO SAY "HE'S THE NUMBER ONE NINJA"!

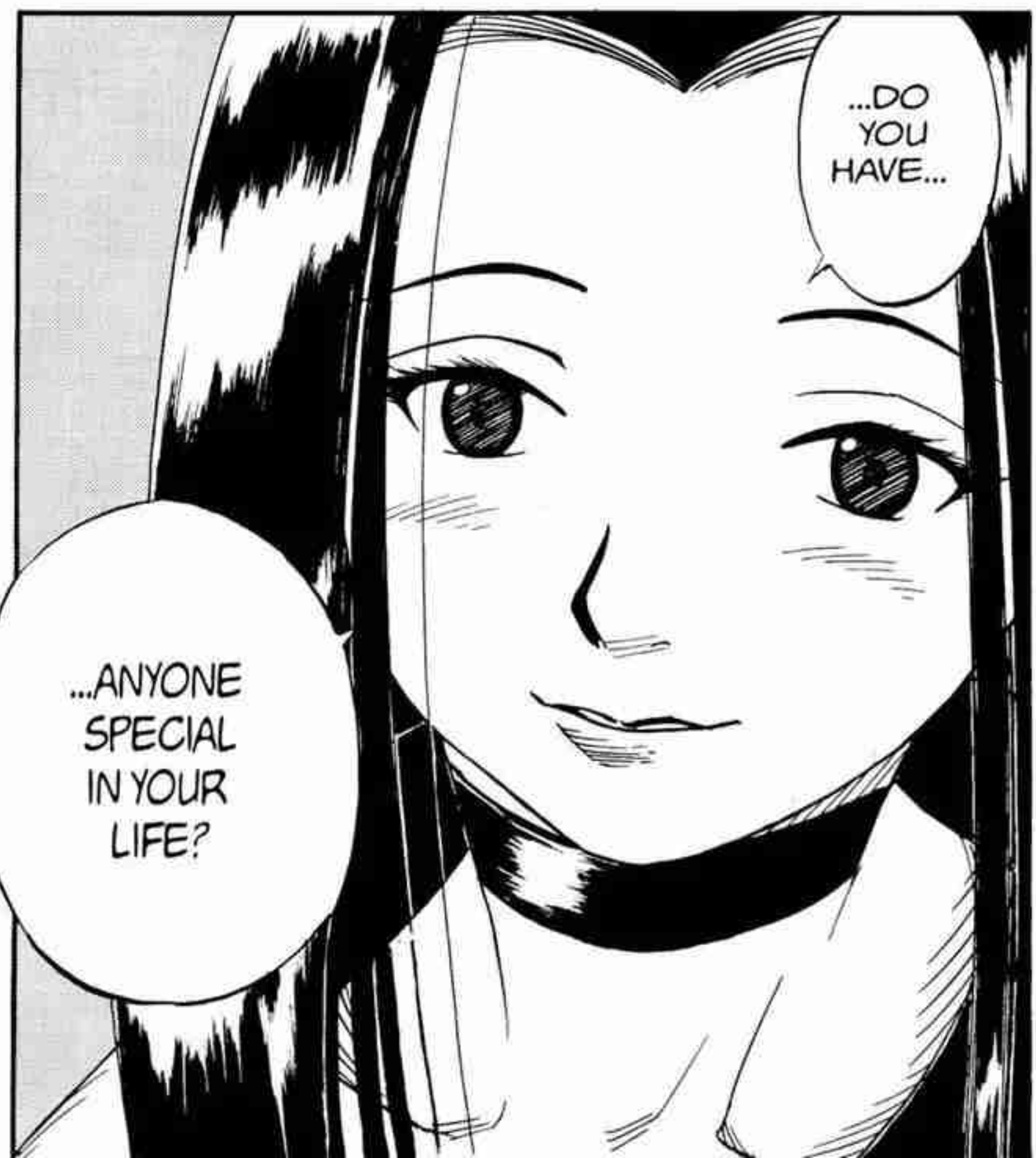
...WHUT?
...

...OR FOR YOUR OWN SATISFACTION?
...ARE YOU DOING THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THAT PERSON...

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
GLARE
!

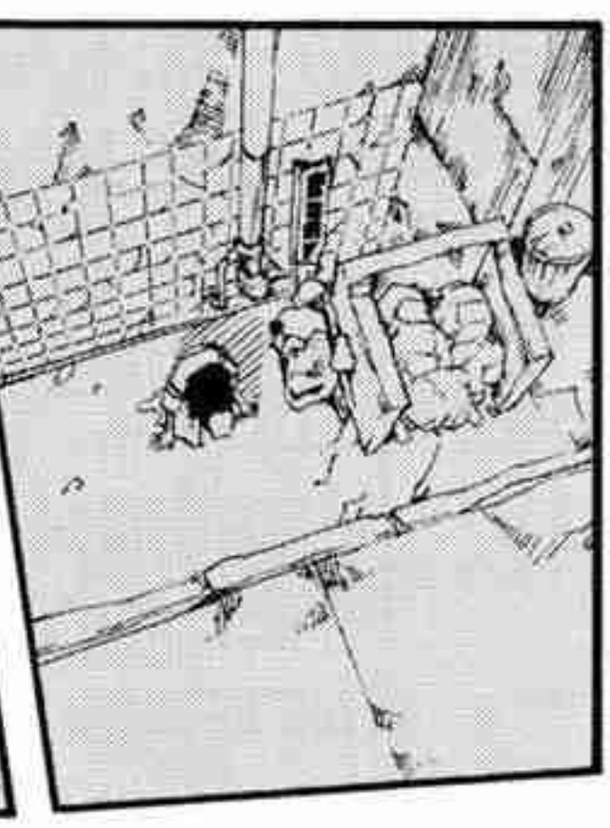

...
·TEE· HEE·

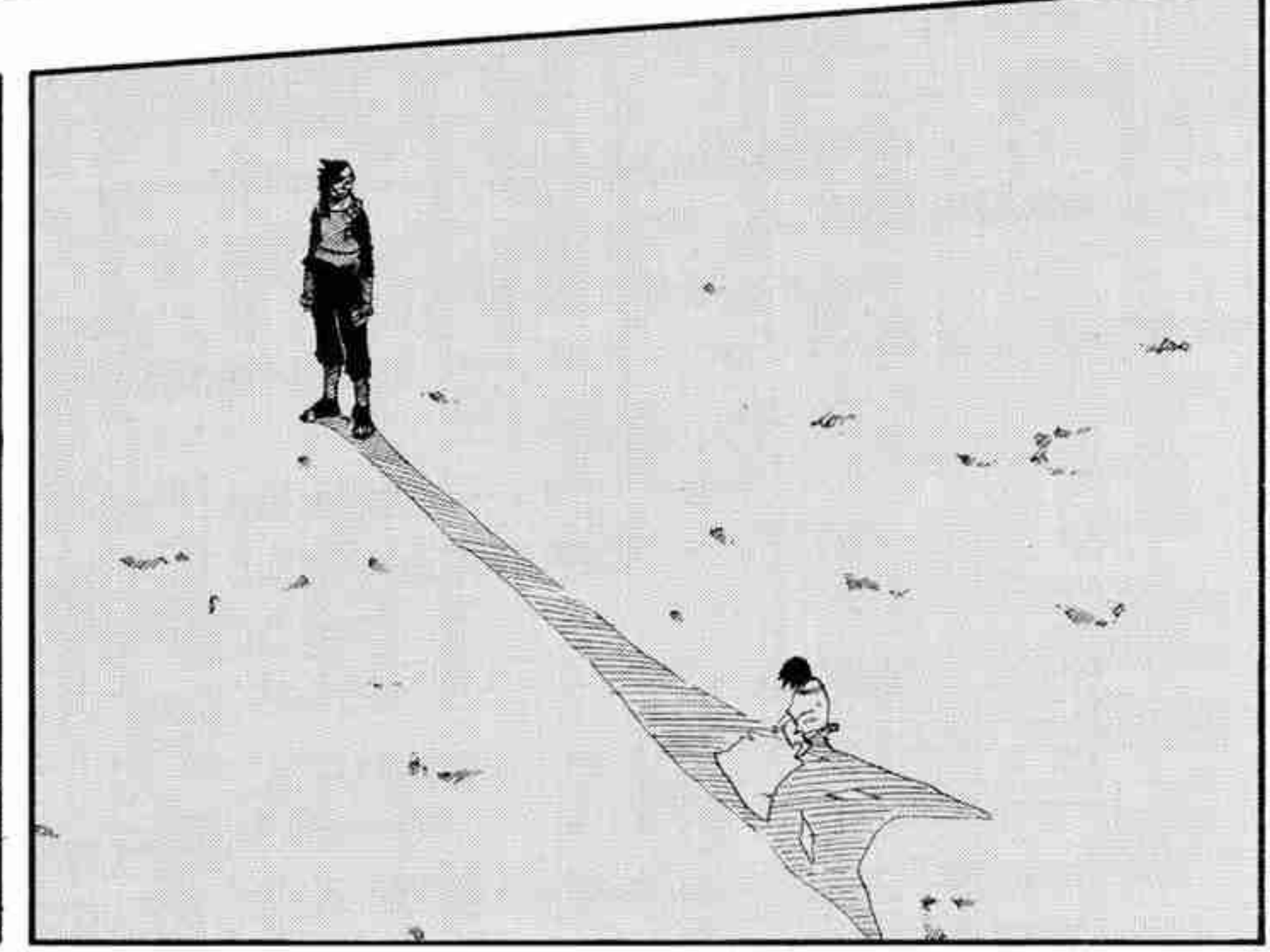
?
!
WHAT'S THIS GIRL DRIVING AT?...


...DO YOU HAVE...
...ANYONE SPECIAL IN YOUR LIFE?

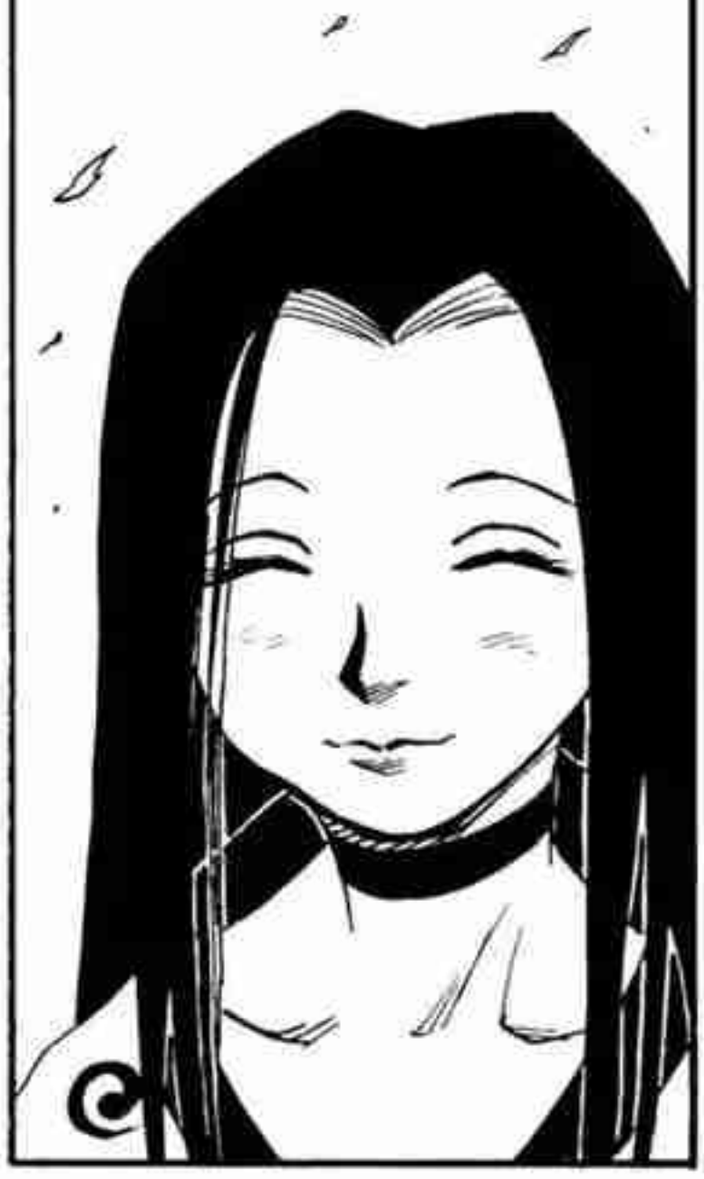
!?

TAK





READ THIS WAY
?
WHAT NOW?
CHA
...
...AS STRONG AS THEY MUST BE!
WHEN PEOPLE...
...ARE PROTECTING SOMETHING TRULY PRECIOUS TO THEM, THEY TRULY CAN BECOME...
KEEP AWAY FROM MASTER IRUKA...
...OR I'LL KILL YOU!
DADDY... LOVES THE CITY WHERE HIS LITTLE BOY LIVES!
JUJUJUJUZ
I WILL NEVER LET MY COMRADES DIE!
...



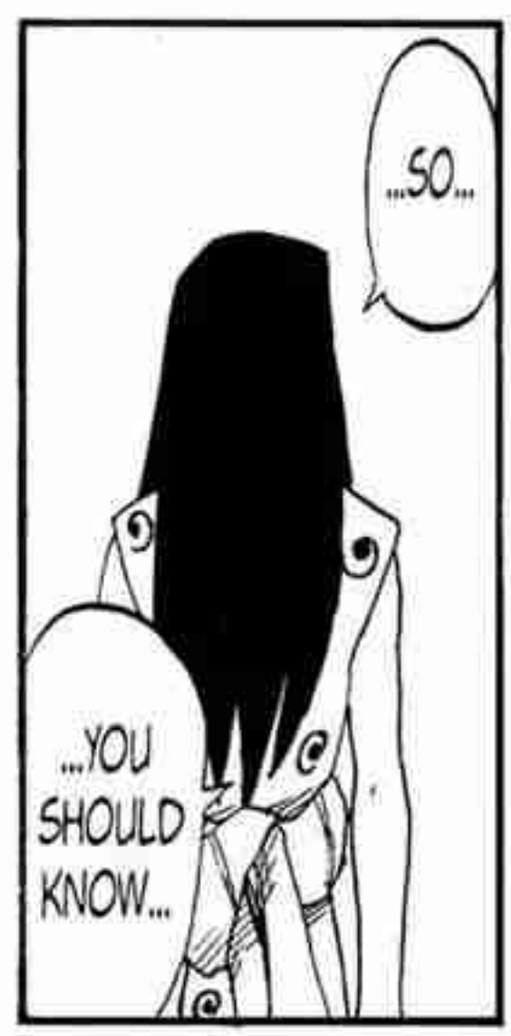
I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!
YUP!
GR
IN

I KNOW WE'LL MEET AGAIN...
YOU WILL GET STRONGER...
RIGHT!

SHF

WHOA··!!
HE'S... HE'S EVEN GIRLIER THAN SAKURA!
NO WAY!

!
I'M A BOY.


...SO...
...YOU SHOULD KNOW...

THE WORLD IS AN AMAZING PLACE SOMETIMES!

?

...

GHF

THE NEXT MORNING -- THE SEVENTH DAY OF TRAINING

...SASUKE SAYS HE'S GOING FOR A WALK... AND HE DISAPPEARS, TOO!

AND AT BREAKFAST TIME...

PUSHING HIMSELF BEYOND HIS LIMIT, GOING OUT BY HIMSELF AGAIN LAST NIGHT...

WHERE DID NARUTO GO **THIS** TIME...?

!

!

!

!

THOK

TA-DAAA!

HUFF

PUFF

HEH-HEH...

DID YOU SEE? LOOKIT HOW HIGH I CAN GO!!

WELL?! WELL?!

SLIP
OO-OOPS!
!
SLIDE

ALLEZ...

IF HE FALLS FROM THAT HEIGHT...!!
NO!!!
!!
YOU IDIOT!!!

WHU-OH!

AIEE--!!
I'M NOT HEALED ENOUGH TO--!

YIPE!!!

TA-DAAAH!
PSYCH-!!
HEH...

OH, YEAH!
I'M GONNA KILL YOU FOR THIS... LATER!
INNER SAKURA
YOU... YOU... ALMOST GAVE ME A HEART ATTACK, YOU JERK!

HAH... GOTCHA, SUCKERS!!
HA-HA!
...
...

TWICE IS TOO MUCH, NARUTO! STOP MESSING AROUND!!!
AGH!!
HEY--!!

UH-OH!!

POOFF
UH--!

YOU BONE-HEAD.

OW!

-AAAAA-

YAAA-

SMAP

GR

WELL, THEY ARE COMING ALONG NICELY!

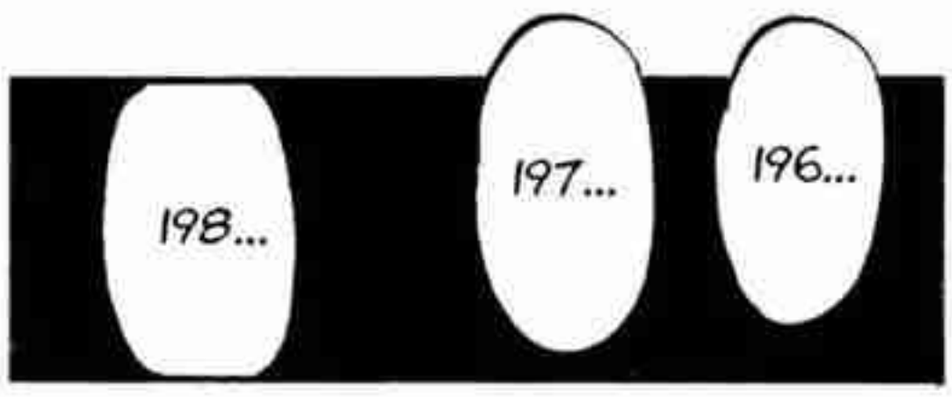
...

YESSSS! SASUKE SAVES THE DAY!! HE GIVES ME SHIVERS!!!

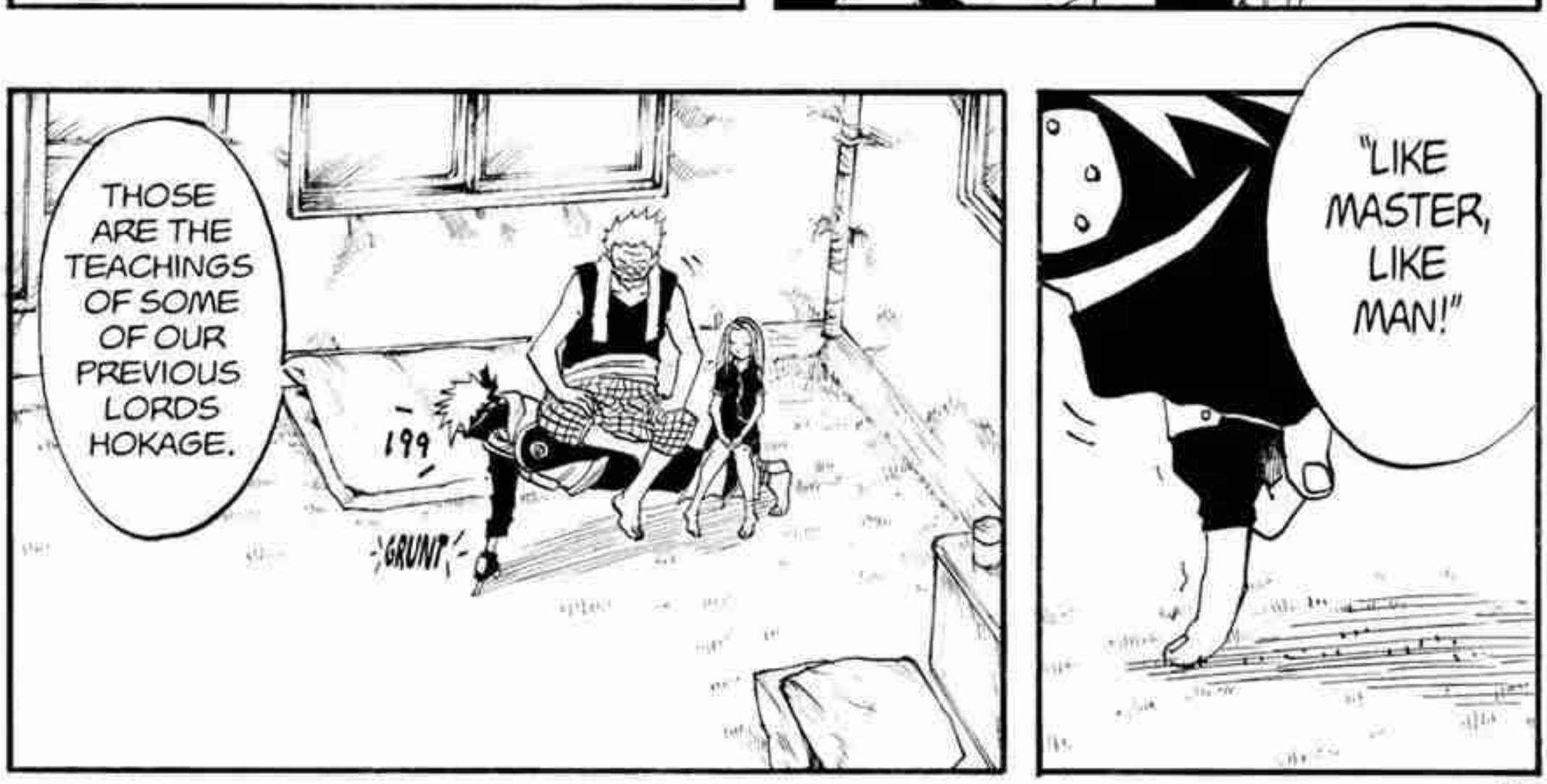
SASUKE!!

...UZUMAKI NARUTO, HUH...

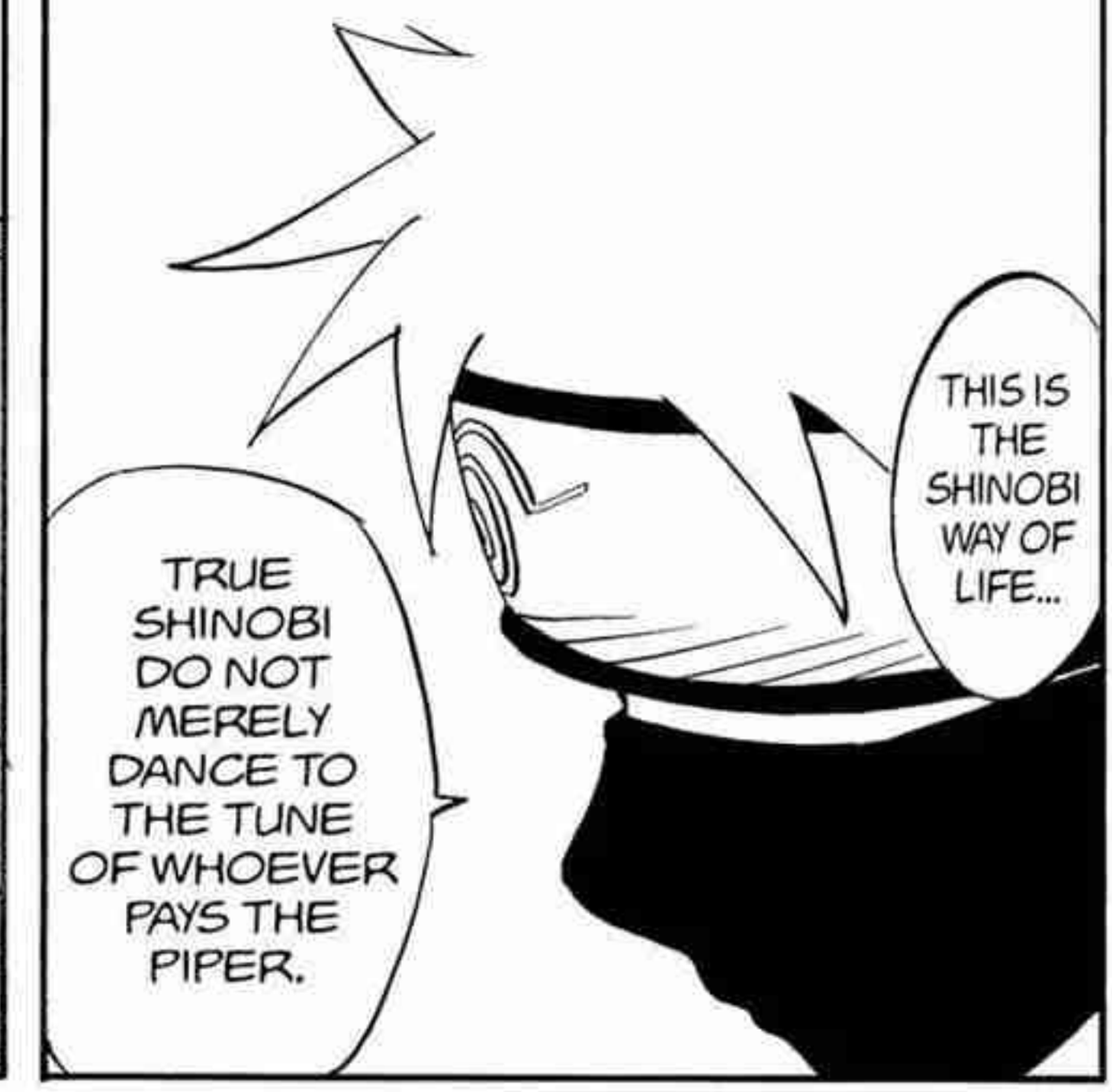
SPLISH SPLASH


198...
197...
196...

"TO KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT AND CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT IS THE ACT OF A COWARD."
... SO WHY DO YOU STAY?
YOU KNOW I DUPED YOU ABOUT HOW DANGEROUS THIS MISSION WAS TO GET YOU TO COME HERE...
...I KEEP MEANING TO ASK YOU...


THOSE ARE THE TEACHINGS OF SOME OF OUR PREVIOUS LORDS HOKAGE.
199
GRUNT
"LIKE MASTER, LIKE MAN!"

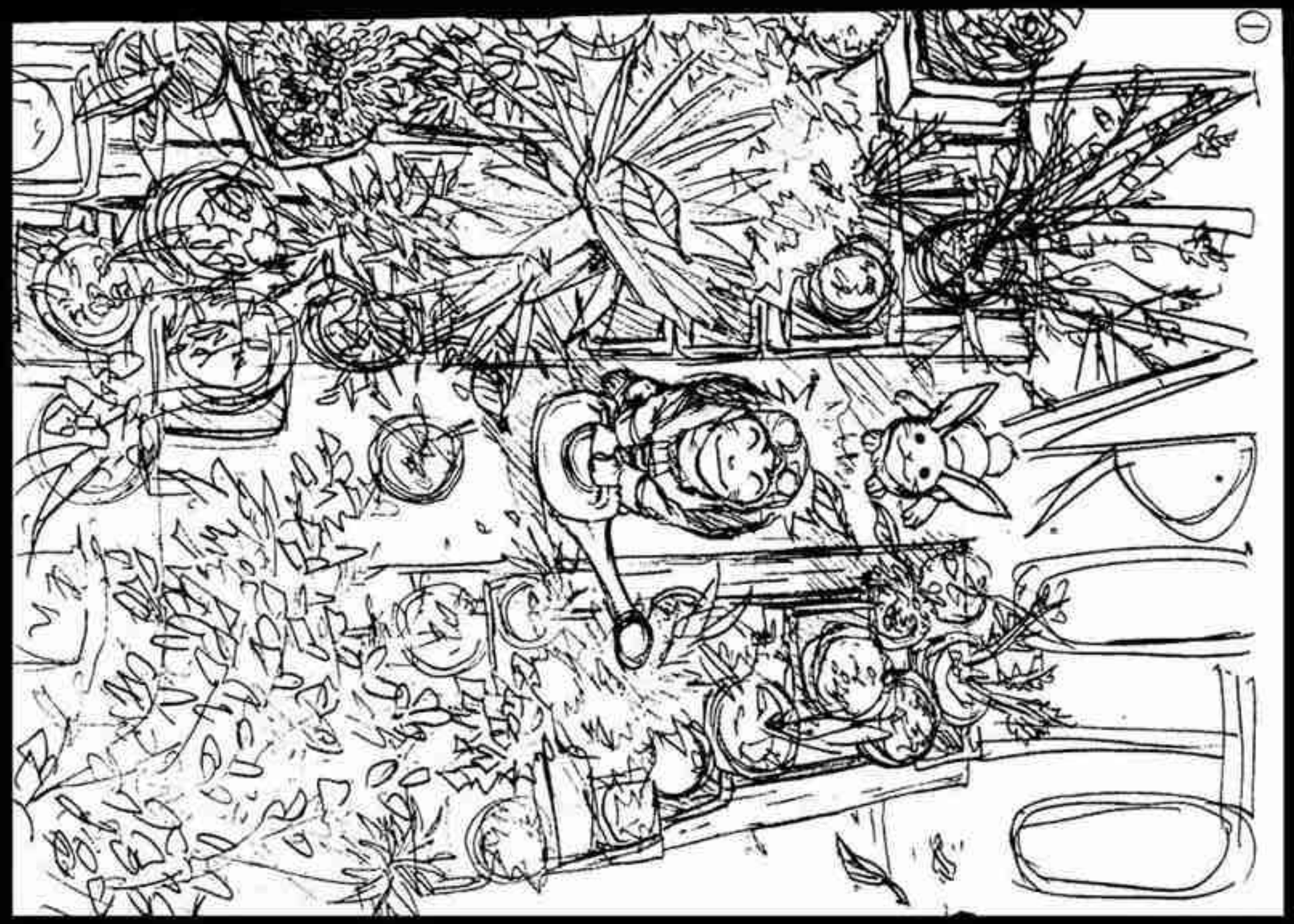
IT LOOKS LIKE I'M ALMOST COMPLETELY HEALED.


THIS IS THE SHINOBI WAY OF LIFE...
TRUE SHINOBI DO NOT MERELY DANCE TO THE TUNE OF WHOEVER PAYS THE PIPER.

MOST OF YOUR STRENGTH HAS RETURNED.
SLOP

KRUNCH

OF COURSE.
EXCELLENT!!
LET'S GET GOING, HAKU!
DRIP
DRIP



Number 22: The Enemies Return

SO, YOU'RE FINALLY BACK!

KREAK

LOOKING LIKE SOMETHING THE CAT DRAGGED IN!

I **TOLD** YOU IF YOU DIDN'T TAKE A BREAK YOU'D WEAR YOURSELF OUT, YOU DOPE.

WE MADE IT TO THE TOP OF THE TREE.

KOFF

KOFF

PUFF

UFF

HEH... BOTH OF US...

YES, SIR!!

...YOU TWO CAN HELP SAKURA PROTECT MR. TAZUNA.

NARUTO, SASUKE, STARTING TOMORROW...

GOOD!

FATHER, YOU AND NARUTO ARE TWO OF A KIND. PLEASE DON'T WORK YOURSELVES TO DEATH!

YEP.

OOOH!

FLOP

BUT CONSTRUCTION IS ALMOST COMPLETE!

WHEW!... WELL, I'M DIRTY, SWEATY, AND REAL WORN OUT FROM ALL OF THE WORK ON THE BRIDGE TODAY...

...INARI...
DON'T CRY...

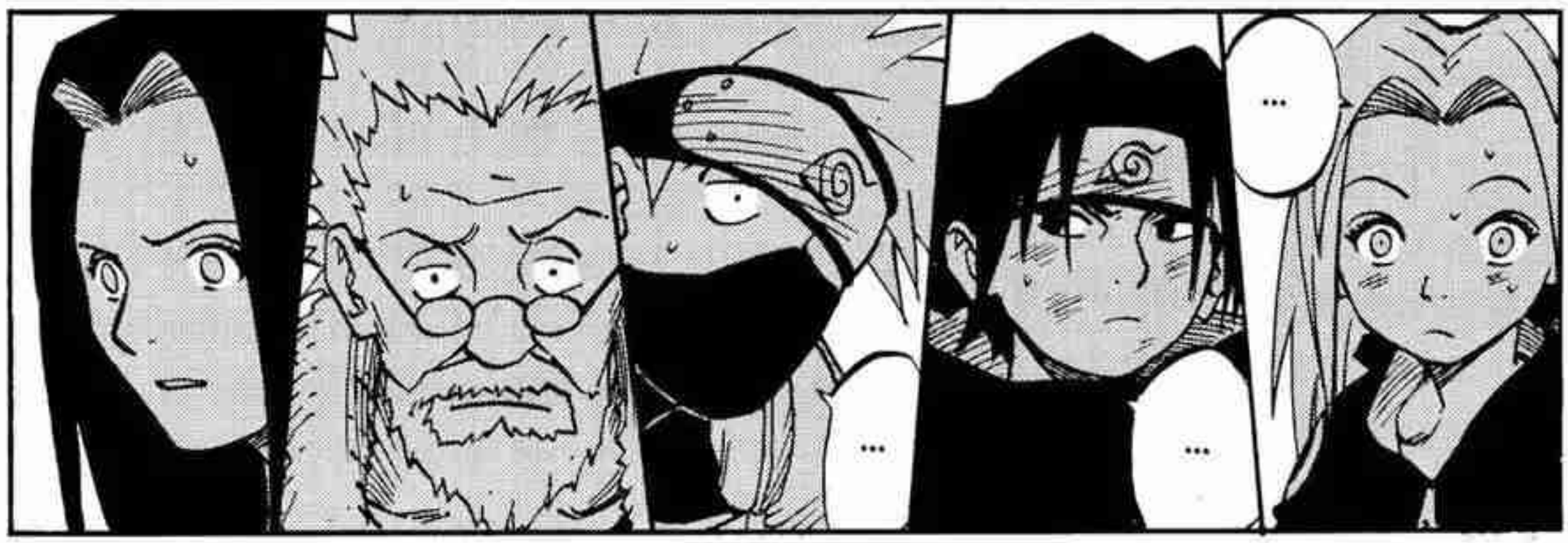
...PROTECT IT WITH ALL THE STRENGTH YOU'VE GOT!
IF SOME-THING IS PRECIOUS TO YOU...

WHAT'S WRONG?

WHY...
WHY...

!

YOU ACT ALL COOL, AND YOU TALK ALL TOUGH...
...BUT BIG, STRONG GUYS LIKE THAT ARE ALWAYS TOO MUCH FOR PEOPLE WEAKER THAN THEY ARE. THEY'LL DESTROY YOU!!
SLAM!
WHY DO YOU WEAR YOURSELF OUT TRYING?
NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRAIN, YOU'LL NEVER BE A MATCH FOR GATÔ'S THUGS!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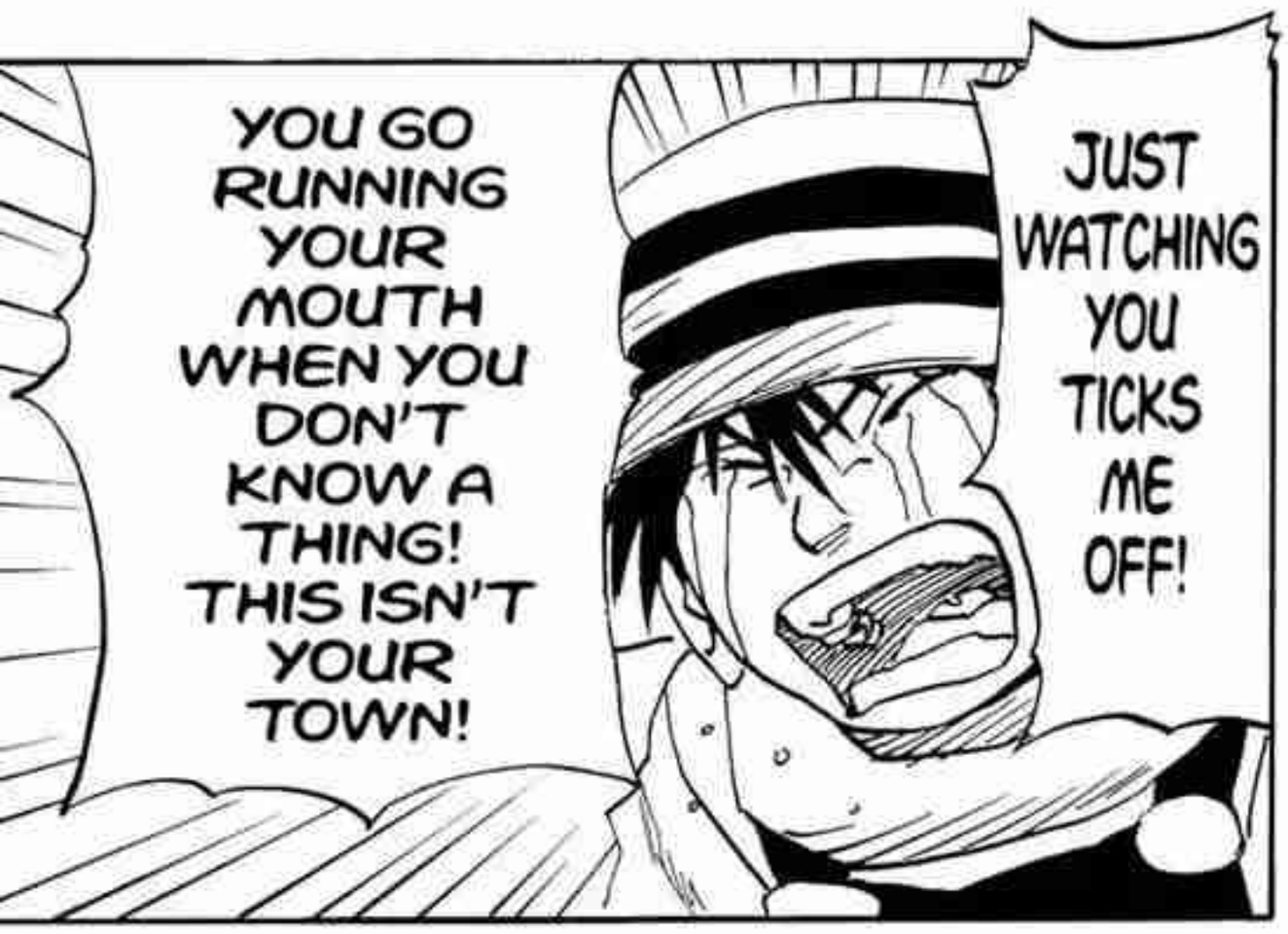
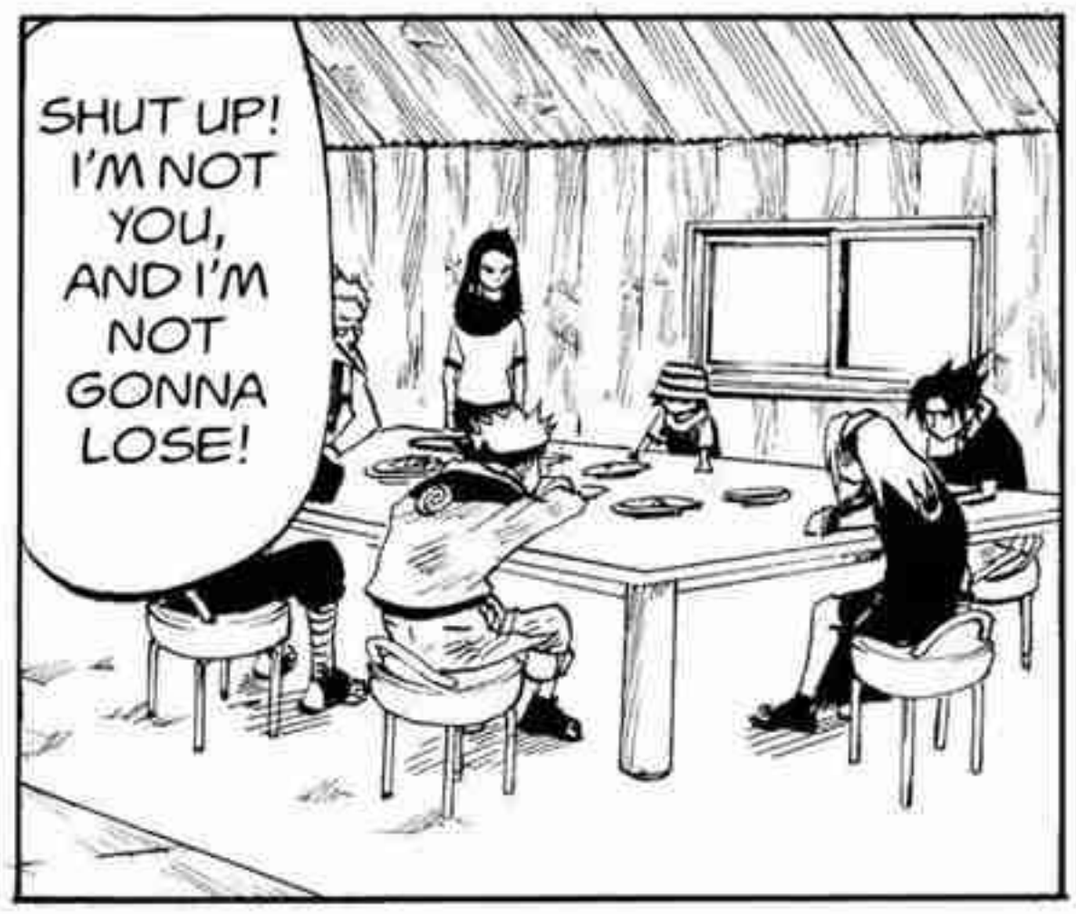

YOU GO RUNNING YOUR MOUTH WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW A THING! THIS ISN'T YOUR TOWN!
JUST WATCHING YOU TICKS ME OFF!


SHUT UP! I'M NOT YOU, AND I'M NOT GONNA LOSE!

YOU'RE ALWAYS CLOWNING AROUND AND HAVING FUN. YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT SUFFERING OR LONELINESS OR WHAT MY LIFE IS LIKE!
AND YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT ME.

SHFF
!
SO...YOU FIGURE IT'S NOBLE TO STAR IN A MELODRAMA AND TREAT EVERYONE AROUND YOU LIKE GUESTS AT YOUR PITY PARTY?

PING

IT TAKES A REALLY BIG MAN TO SIT AROUND AND CRY... YOU BRAT!

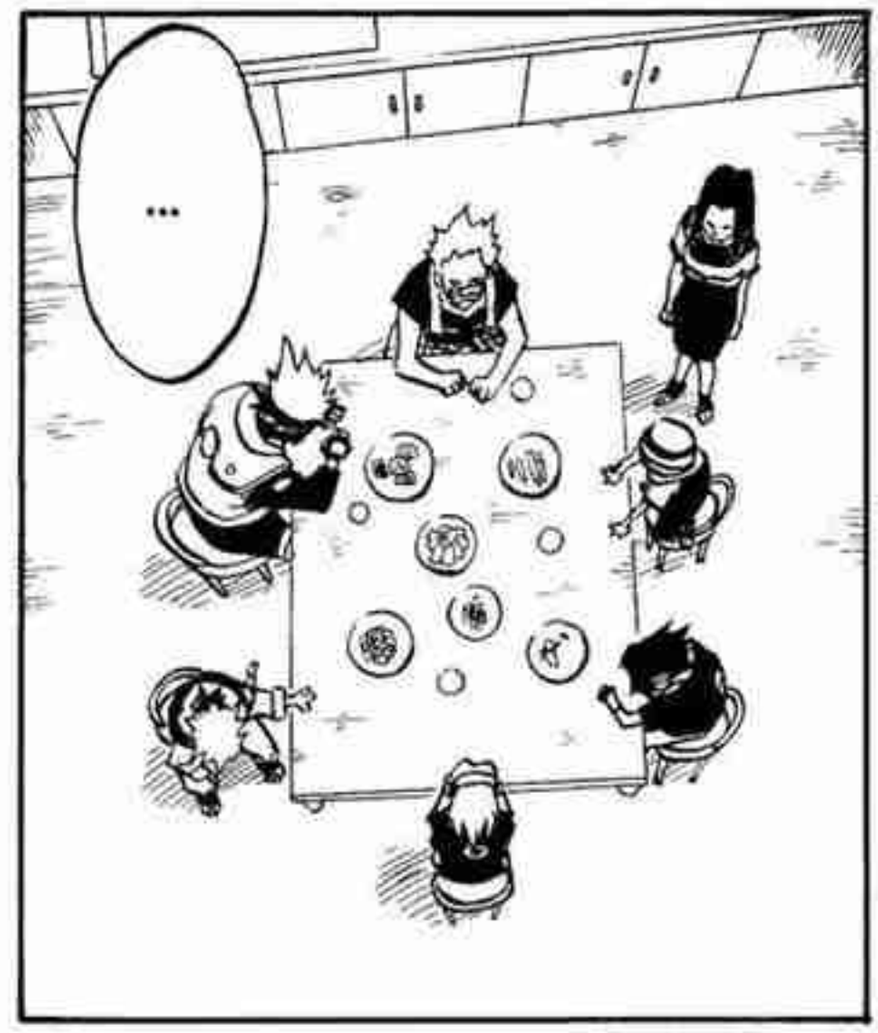
GRRRRR

YOU BIG BABY!!

...

SOB...

HMMF
NARUTO! YOU WENT TOO FAR!
SKLIFF
SLAM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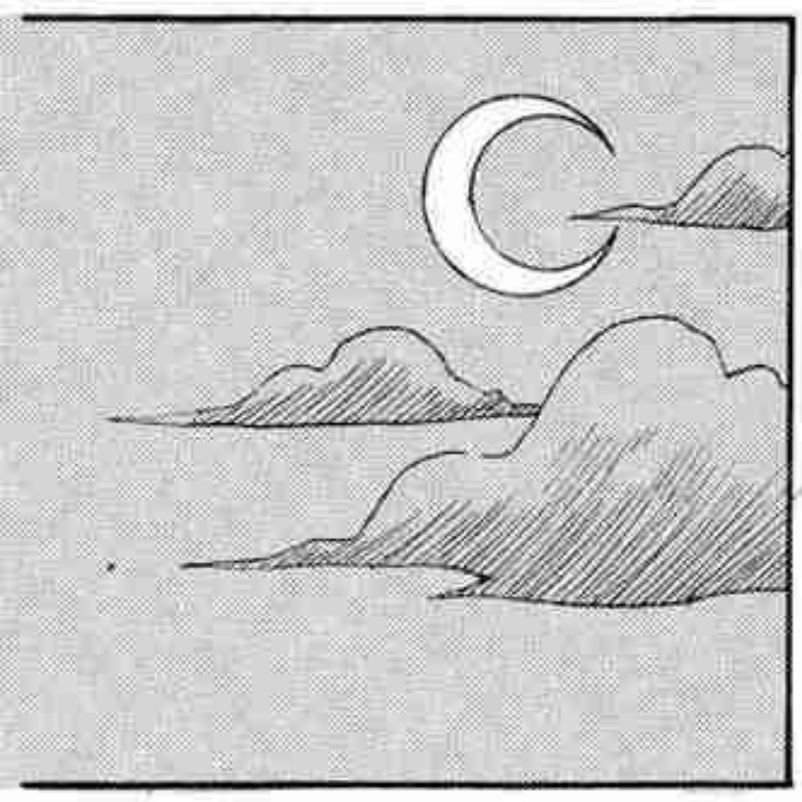
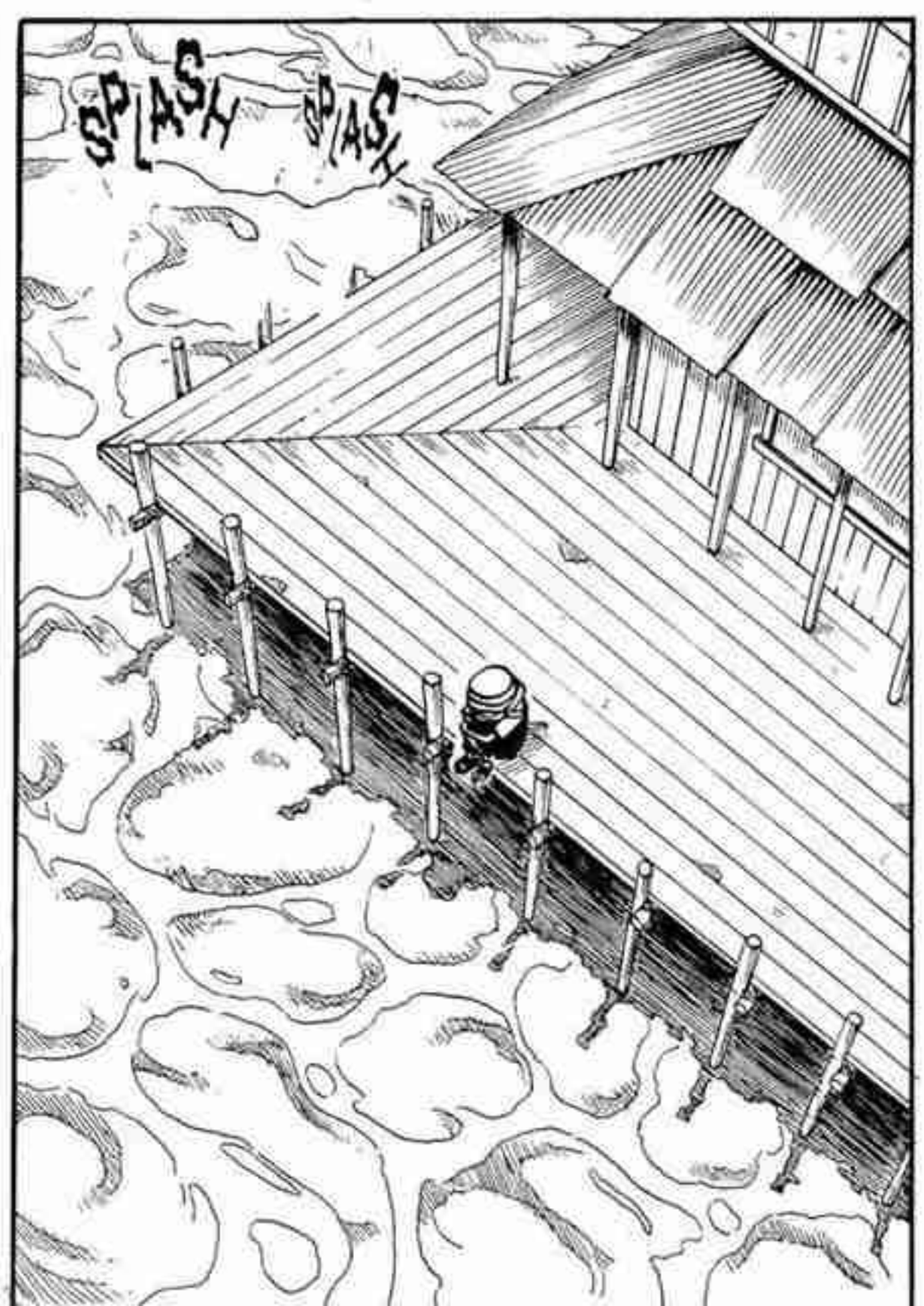
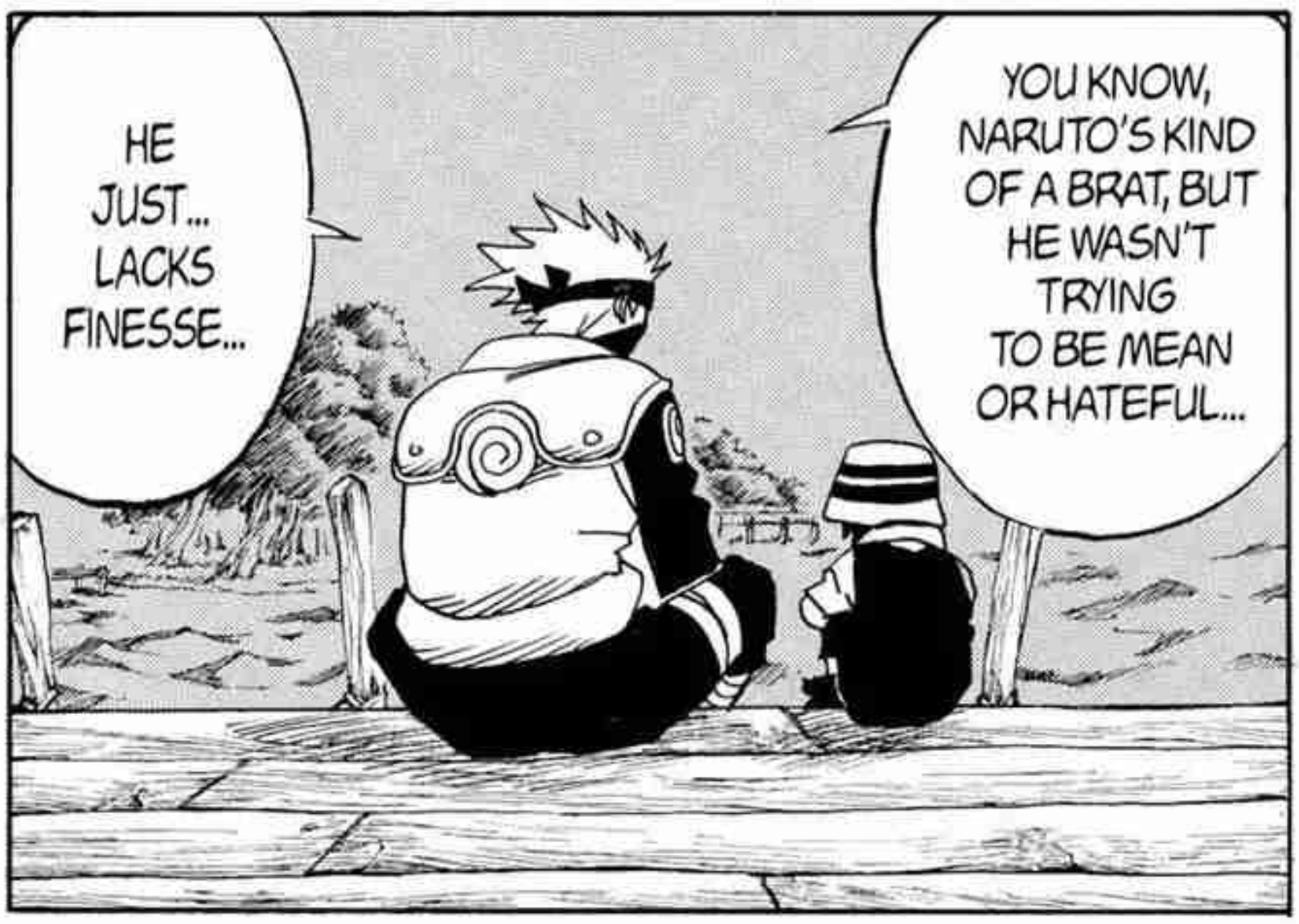
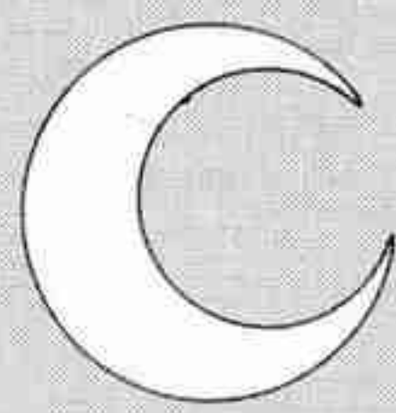


...

MAY I JOIN YOU...?


SPLASH
SPLASH


HE JUST... LACKS FINESSE...
YOU KNOW, NARUTO'S KIND OF A BRAT, BUT HE WASN'T TRYING TO BE MEAN OR HATEFUL...



NARUTO GREW UP WITHOUT A FATHER, SAME AS YOU.
jab

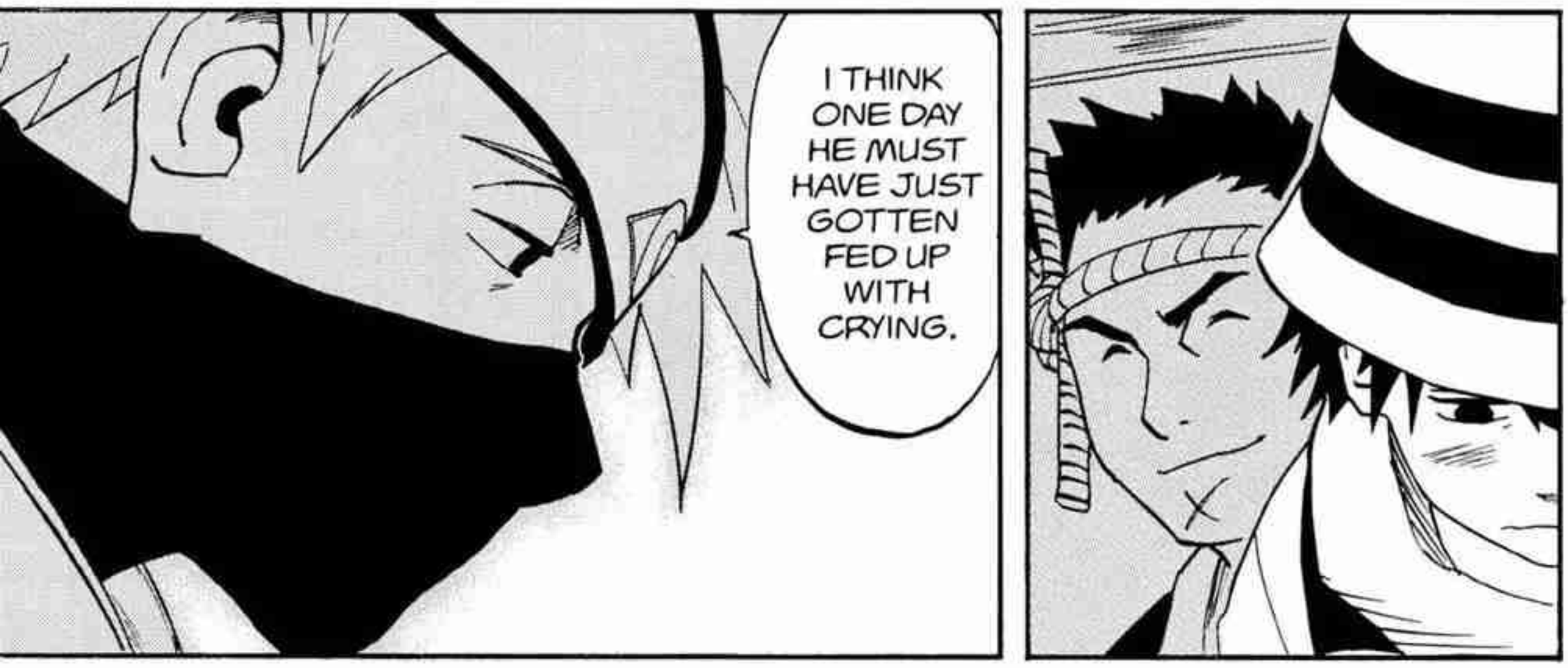
MR. TAZUNA TOLD US ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FATHER.

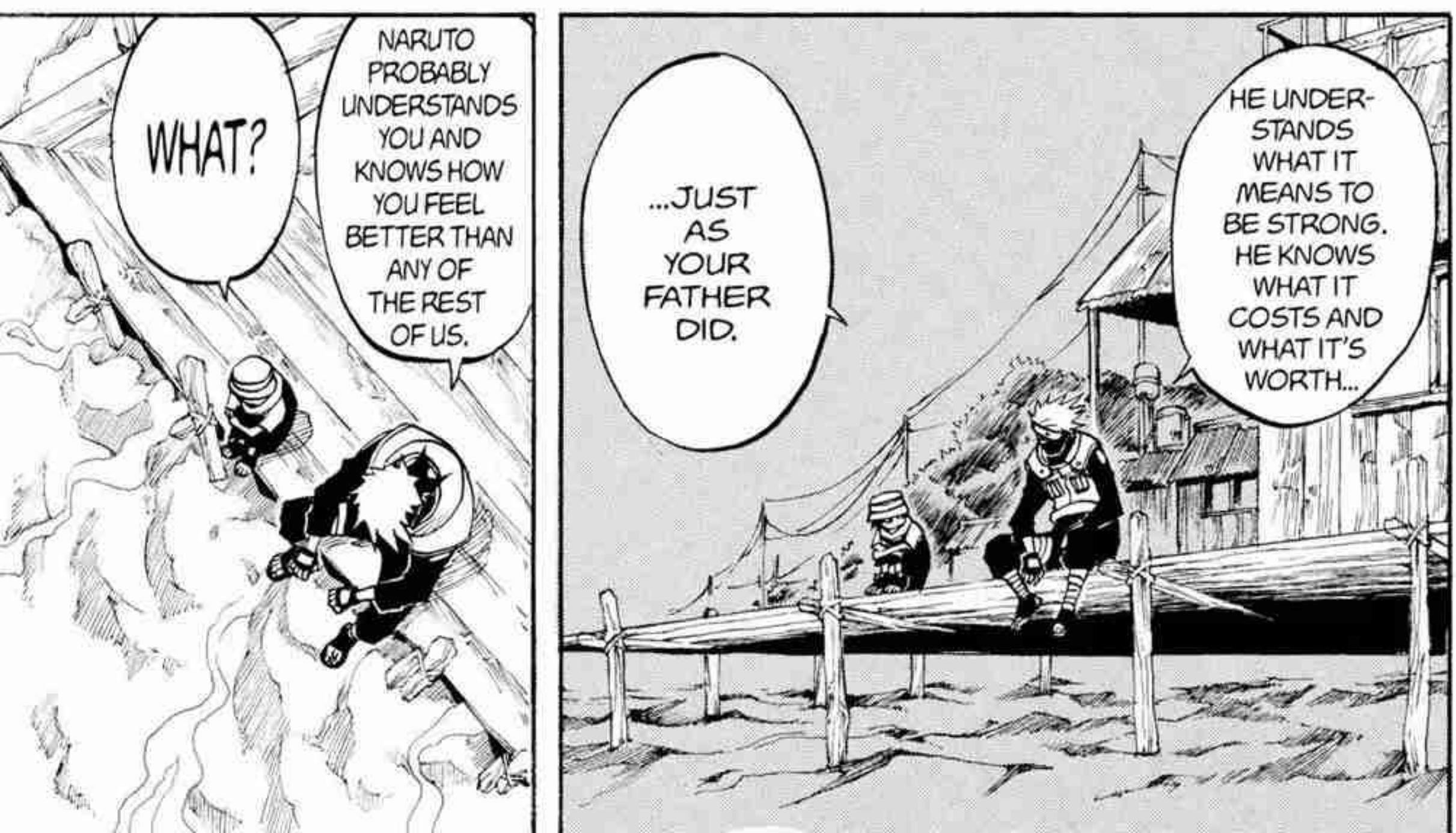
...

HE ALWAYS...
AND IN ALL THE TIME I'VE KNOWN HIM, I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM CRY. OR USE HIS TROUBLES AS AN EXCUSE TO SULK OR BE A COWARD. NOT ONCE.

HIS WHOLE LIFE IS ONE BIG, PAINFUL MEMORY.
...ACTUALLY, WITHOUT ANY PARENTS. HE DOESN'T REMEMBER EITHER ONE OF THEM. OR HAVE A SINGLE FRIEND.
R-REALLY?

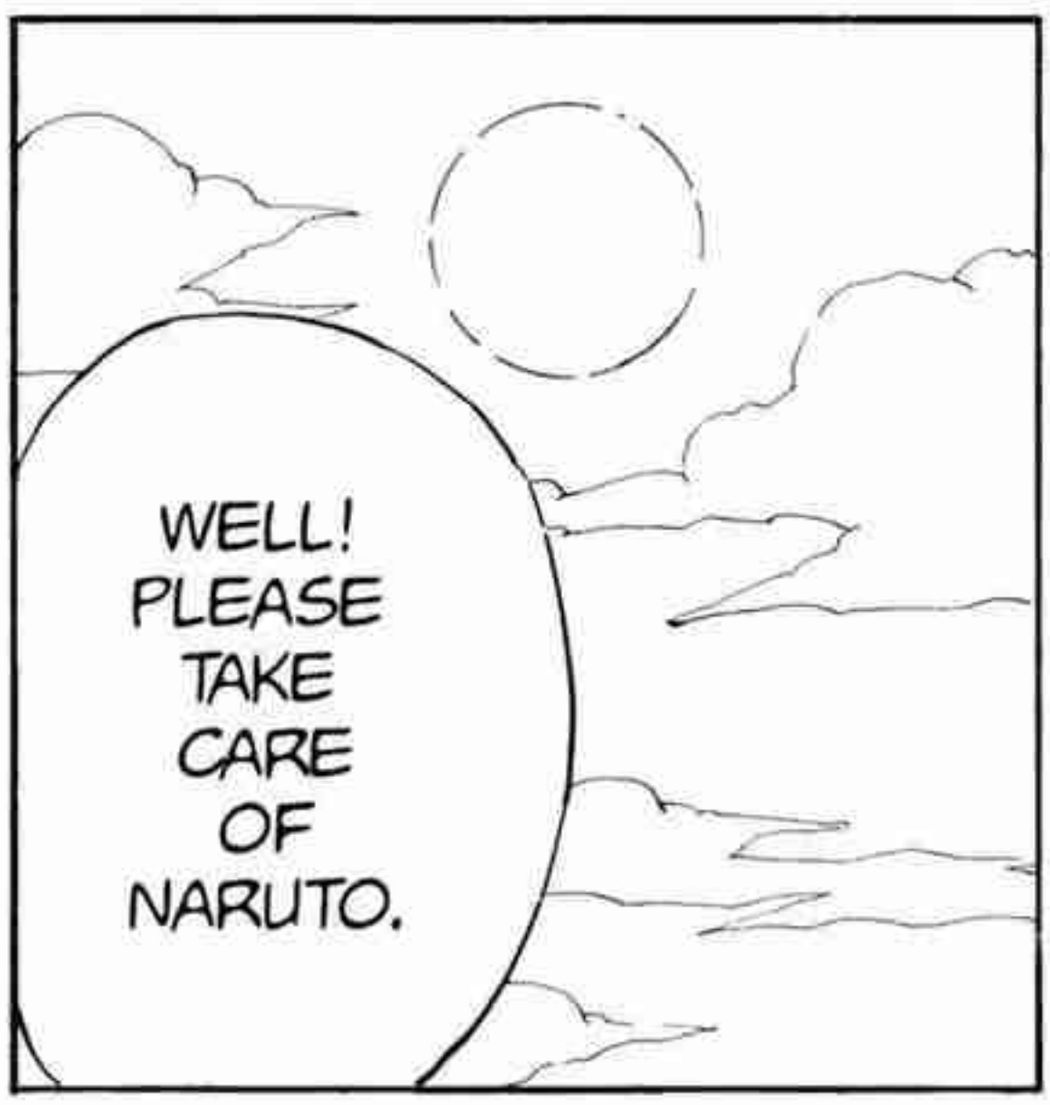
THAT'S HIS DREAM, AND HE'S RISKED HIS LIFE FOR IT.
...TRIES HIS HARDEST, HOPING SOMEONE WILL NOTICE AND GIVE HIM A KIND WORD OR A PAT ON THE BACK.

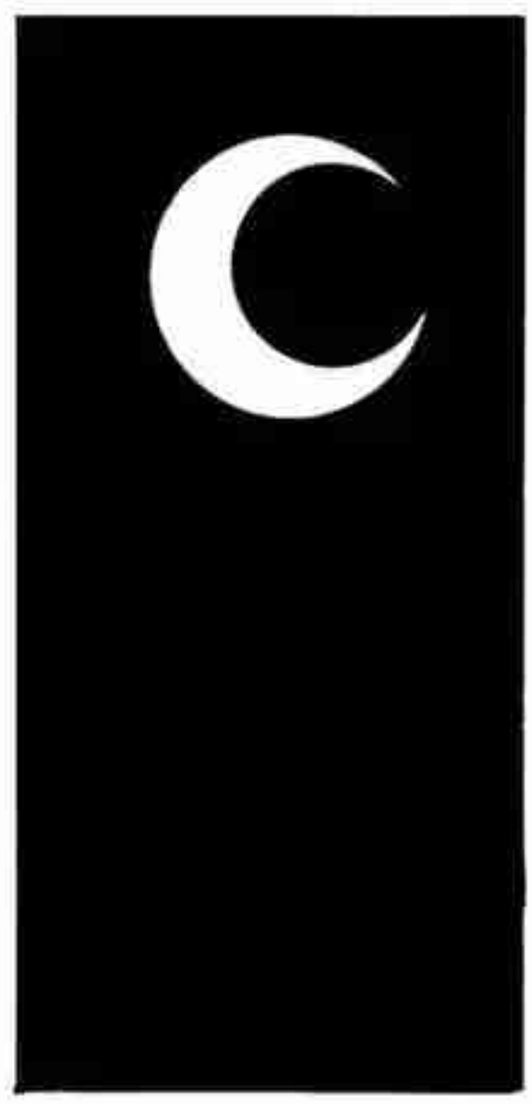

I THINK ONE DAY HE MUST HAVE JUST GOTTEN FED UP WITH CRYING.


WHAT?
NARUTO PROBABLY UNDERSTANDS YOU AND KNOWS HOW YOU FEEL BETTER THAN ANY OF THE REST OF US.
...JUST AS YOUR FATHER DID.
HE UNDER-STANDS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE STRONG. HE KNOWS WHAT IT COSTS AND WHAT IT'S WORTH...

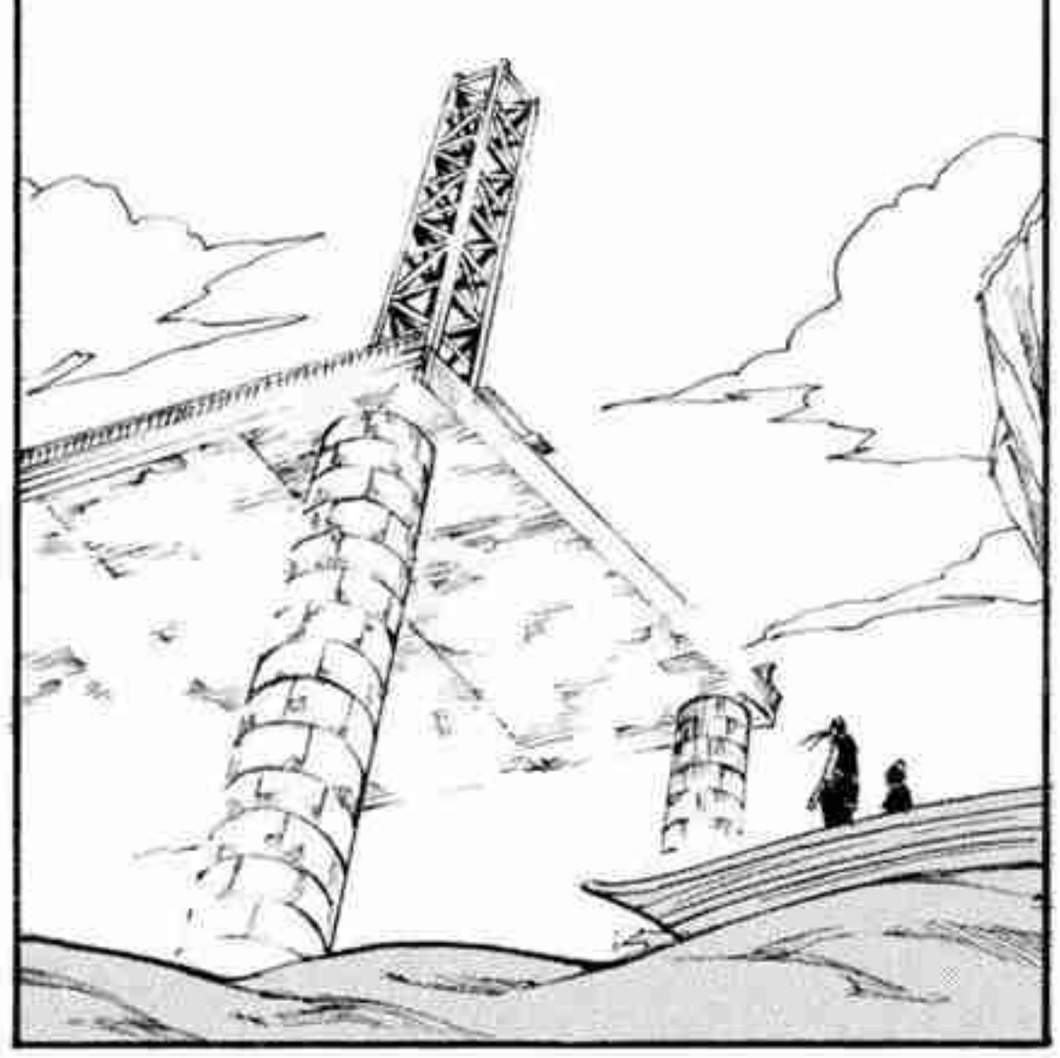
... BECAUSE YOU'VE GOTTEN UNDER HIS SKIN.

HE CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE...



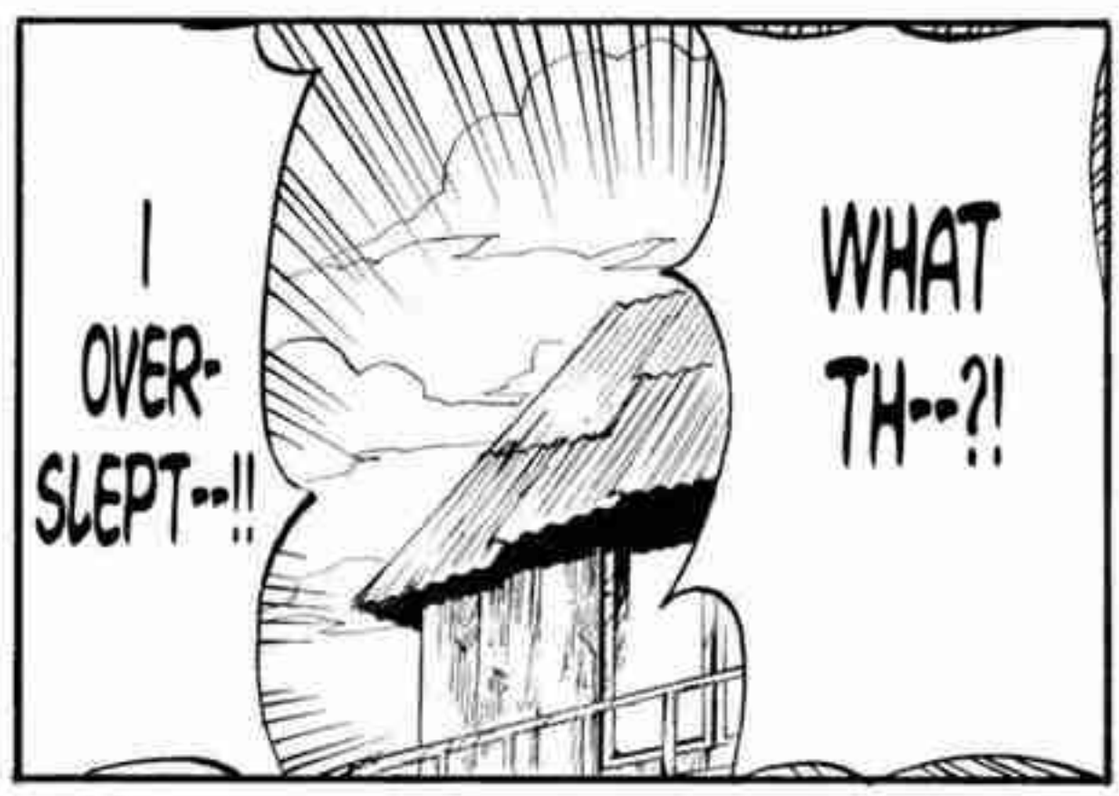


ARE YOU READY TO ATTACK?!



OF COURSE.
TIME TO GO, HAKU.
ZZT KRACKLE
ZABUZA, PAY ATTENTION!!!

OH! NARUTO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP?
HEY! HELLO?! WHERE'D EVERYBODY GO?


I OVER-SLEPT--!!
WHAT TH--?!

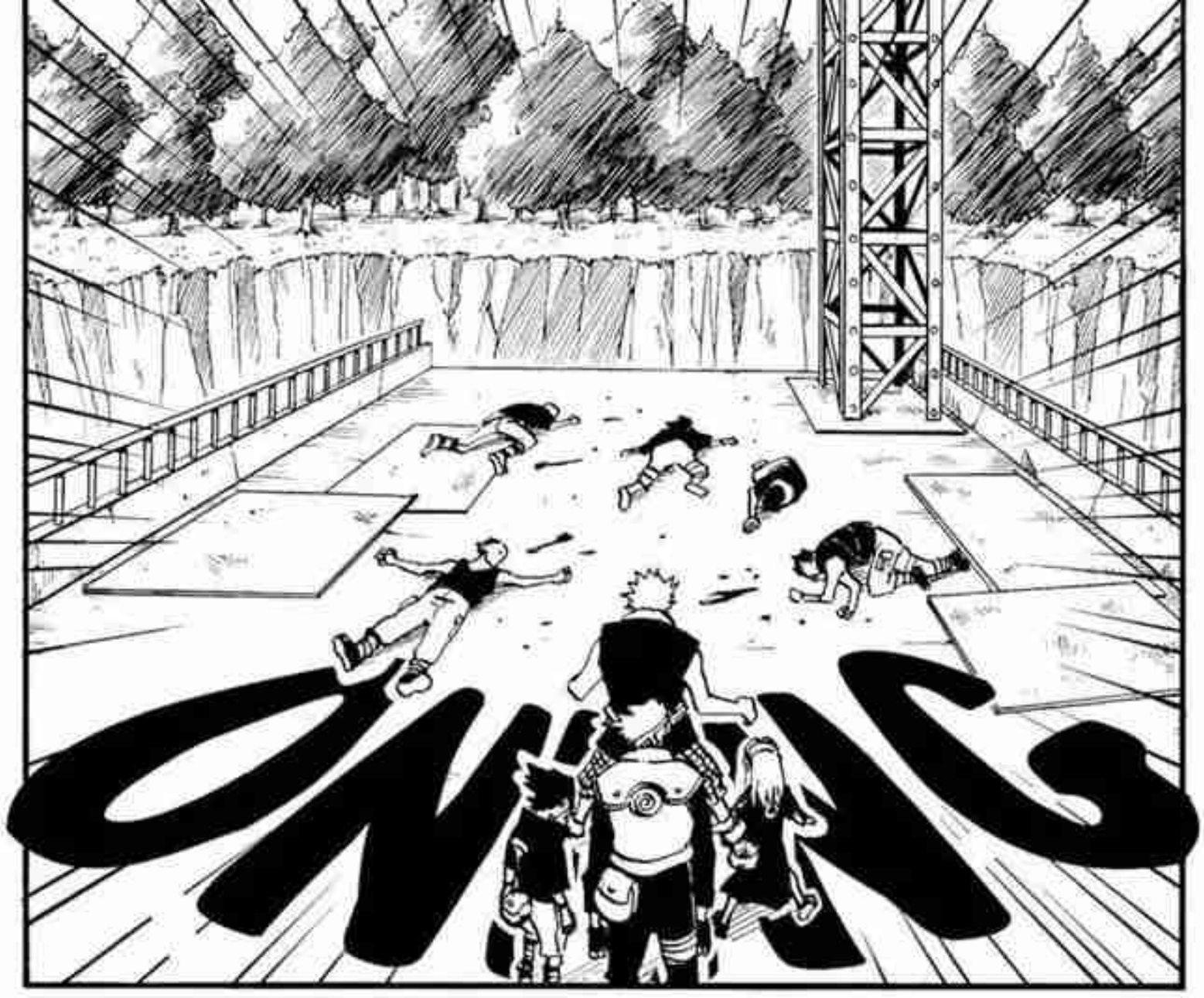
FIRST CHANCE THEY GET, THEY LEAVE ME BEHIND!!
FLUP
OOOH--! I KNEW IT!

STOMP
STOMP
MASTER KAKASHI WANTED YOU TO TAKE TODAY OFF.

I'M OUTTA HERE!

...

STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMPITY STOMP


CRACK

WH-WHAT THE HELL...?

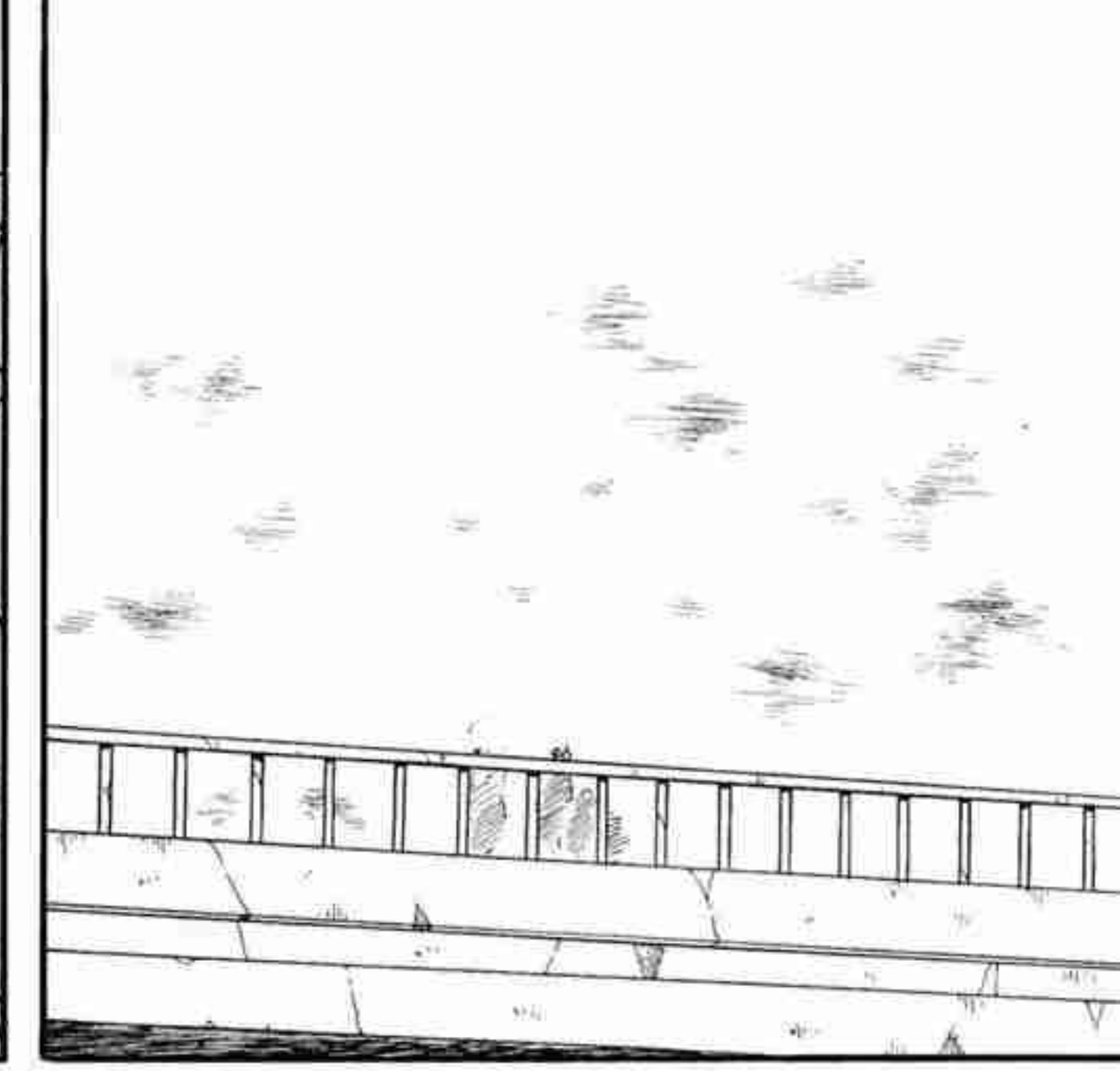
...
IT CAN'T BE...

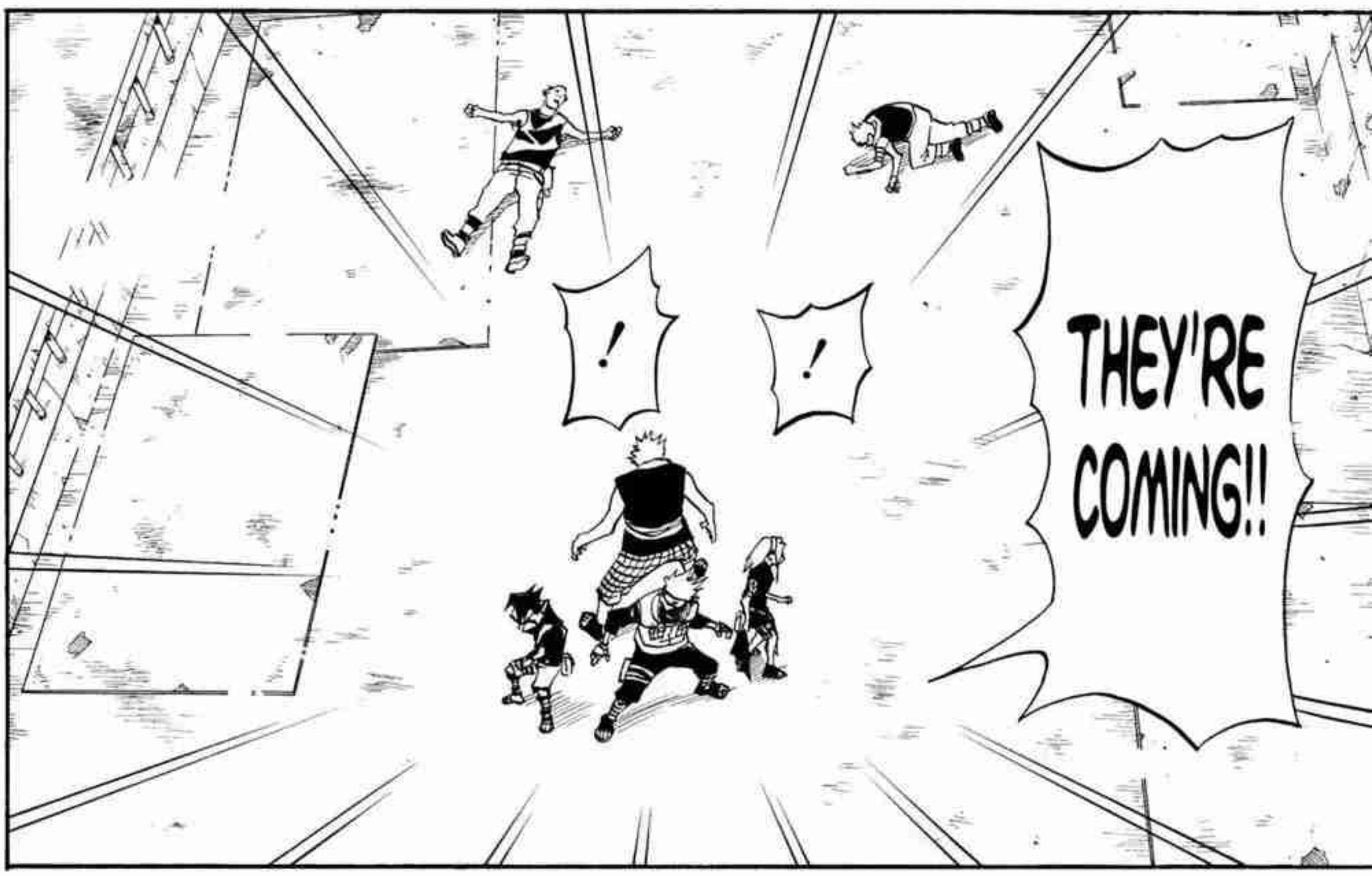
M-MONSTERS...

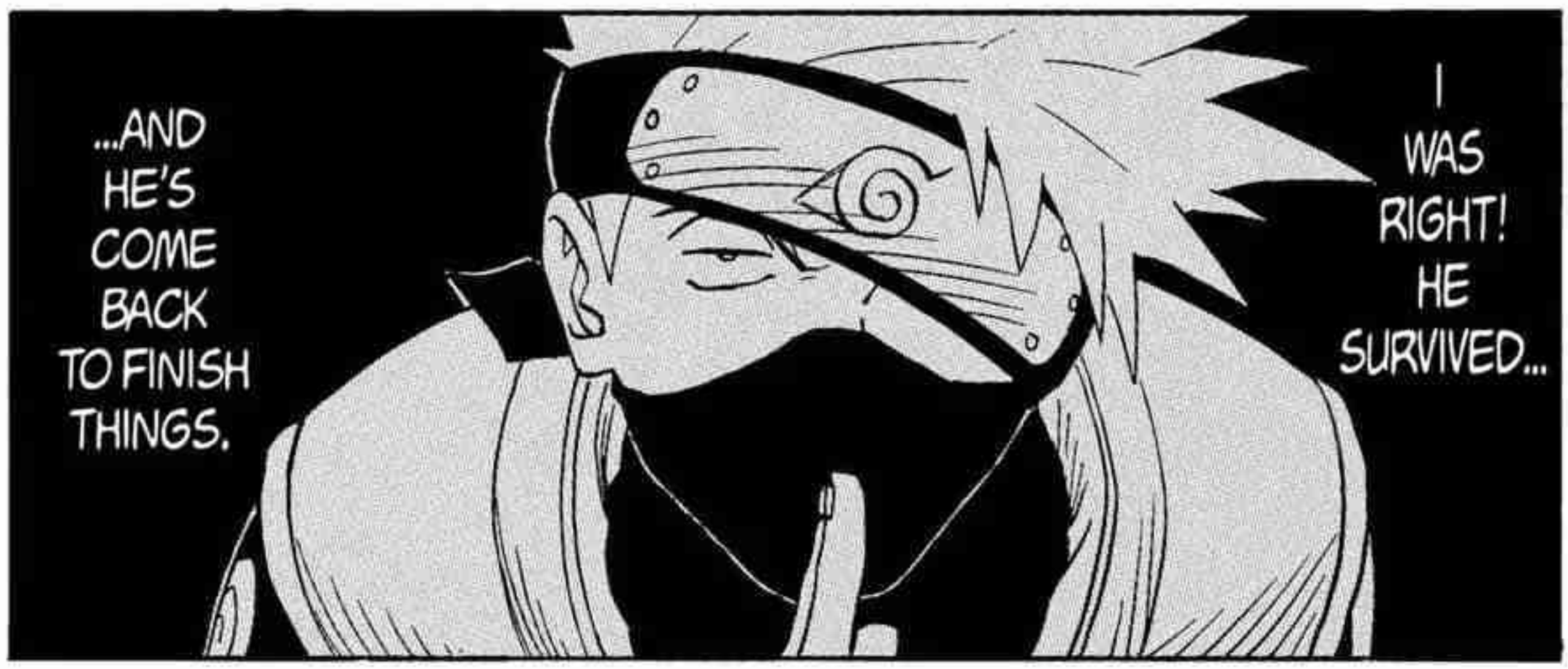
WHAT... COULD HAVE...?!
WHAT HAPPENED?!

OKAY, MOM— BUT I'M IN THE BATHROOM NOW!!
HEH
K-CHAK
TAK
INARI— COULD YOU PLEASE HELP ME DO THE LAUNDRY?

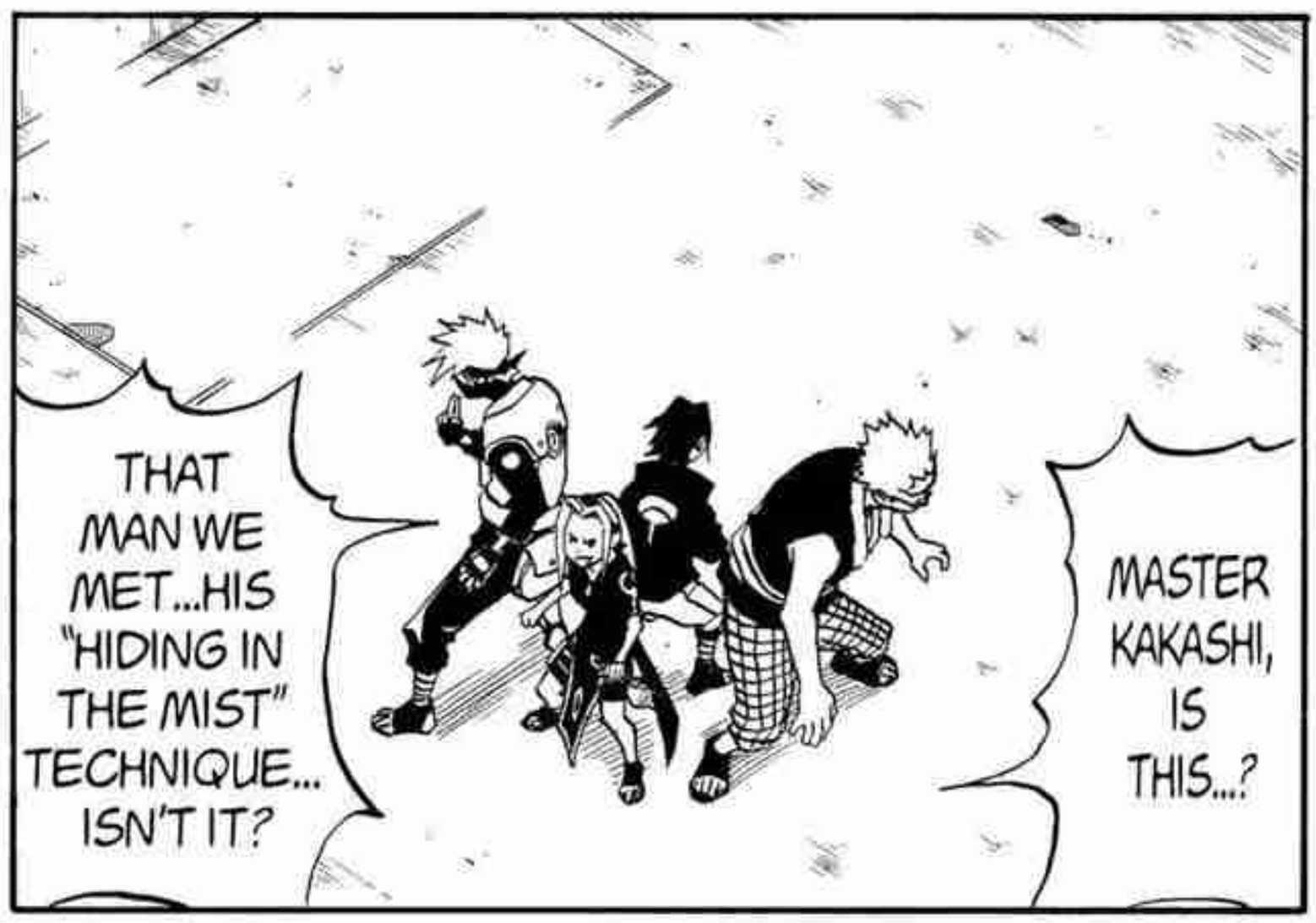
THE MIST...
!




!
!
THEY'RE COMING!!


...AND HE'S COME BACK TO FINISH THINGS.
I WAS RIGHT! HE SURVIVED...

TOK


THAT MAN WE MET...HIS "HIDING IN THE MIST" TECHNIQUE... ISN'T IT?
MASTER KAKASHI, IS THIS...?

AND I SEE YOU'VE GOT THOSE BRATS TAGGING ALONG, JUST LIKE LAST TIME. AND THE LITTLE BOY IS TREMBLING AGAIN, POOR THING....

BEEN A WHILE, KAKASHI...

SHUDDER

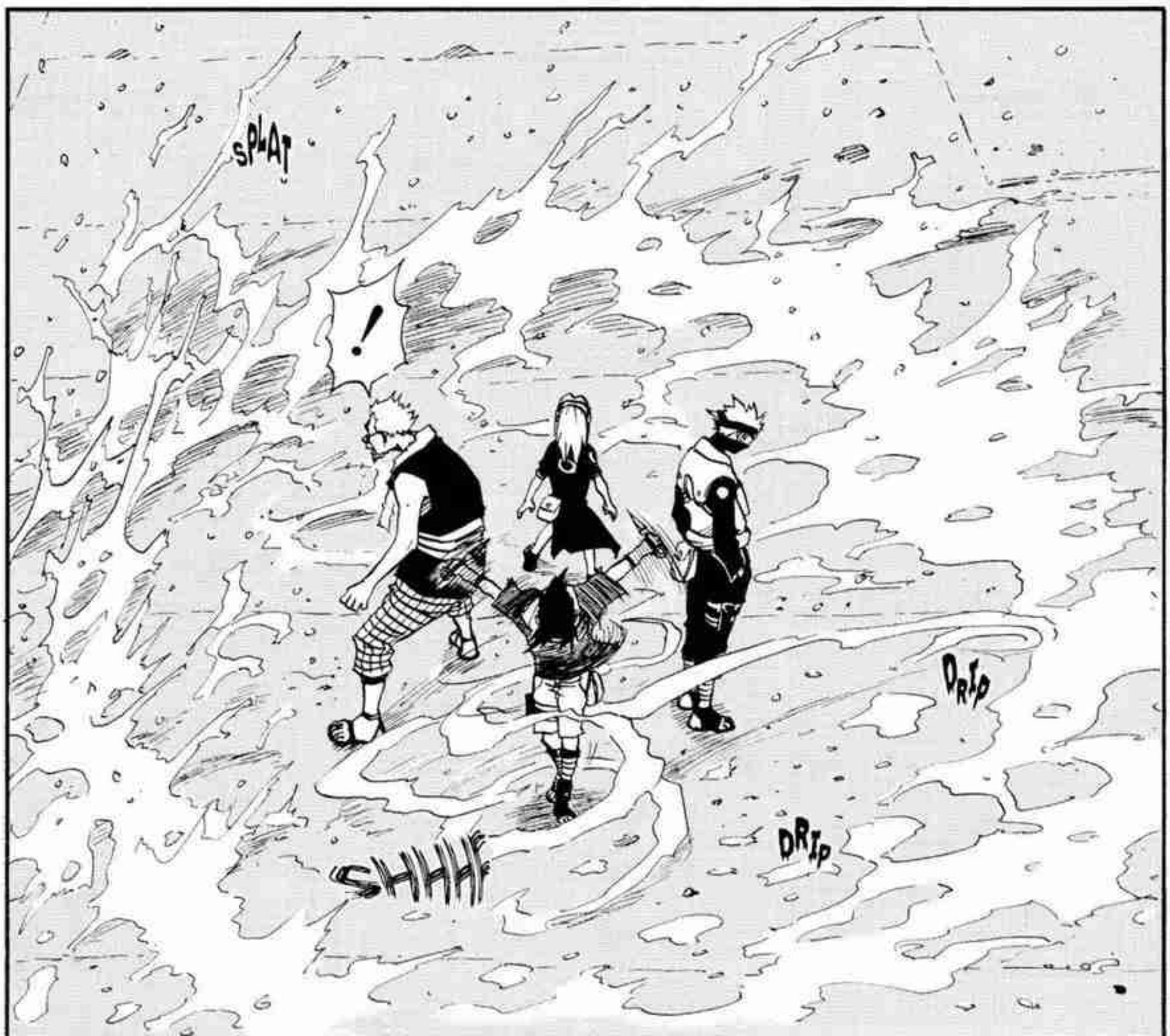
!!
I'M SHAKING WITH EAGERNESS FOR A REMATCH!

SWOOSH
TAK

GO AHEAD...
...SASUKE.

HAH

SPLASH
SPLATTER


SPLAT
!
DRIP
DRIP
SHHHF

THERE...

IT SEEMS THE BRATS HAVE MATURED QUITE A BIT...
WELL! MY WATER DOPPEL-GANGERS WERE OBVIOUSLY NO MATCH FOR YOU!
!

...INTO WORTHY RIVALS... EH, HAKU?
INDEED!

IT SEEMS THE BRAT HAS MATURED INTO A WORTHY RIVAL... EH, HAKU?
INDEED!

Number 23: Ambush Times Two!

HE HAS NERVE, SHOWING UP LIKE THIS!

... IS PLAYING ON ZABUZA'S TEAM.

OUR MYSTERIOUS MASKED FRIEND...

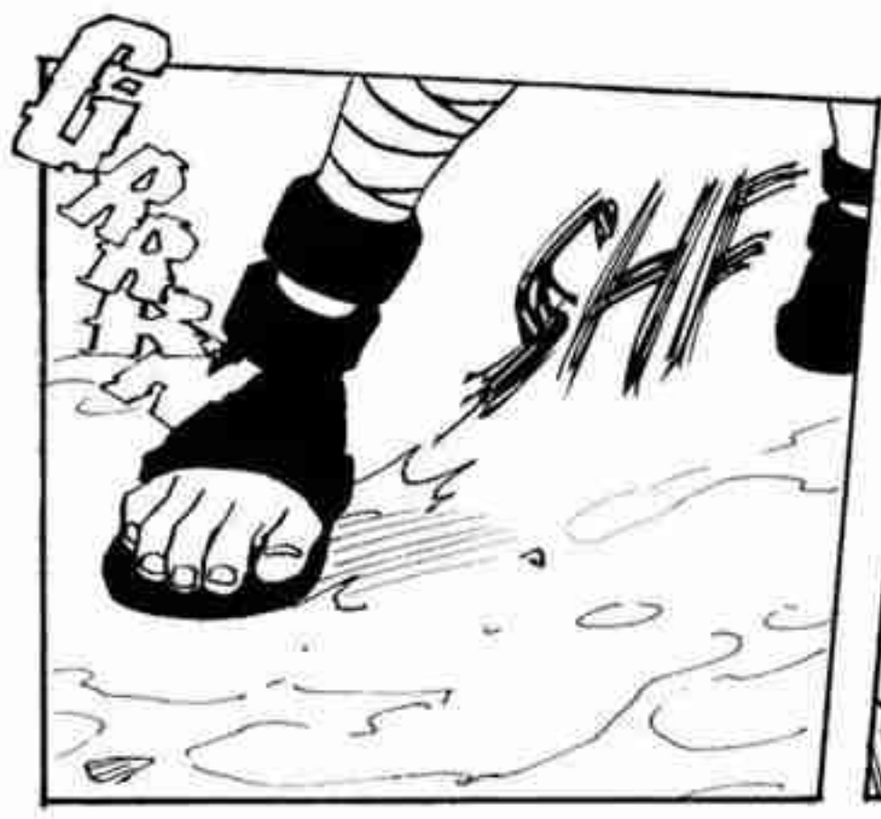
THIS ONE'S MINE.

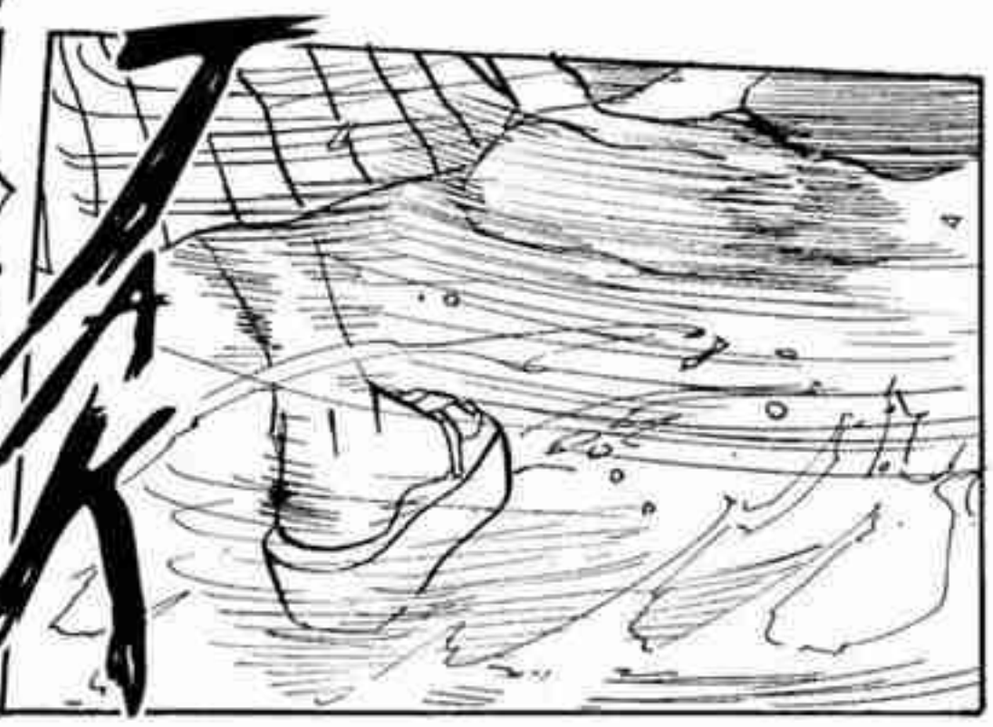
EH...?

YES, SIR.

Go! BUT WE'RE STILL ON THE OFFENSIVE.

...IT'S AMAZING HE WAS ABLE TO DO SO WELL.





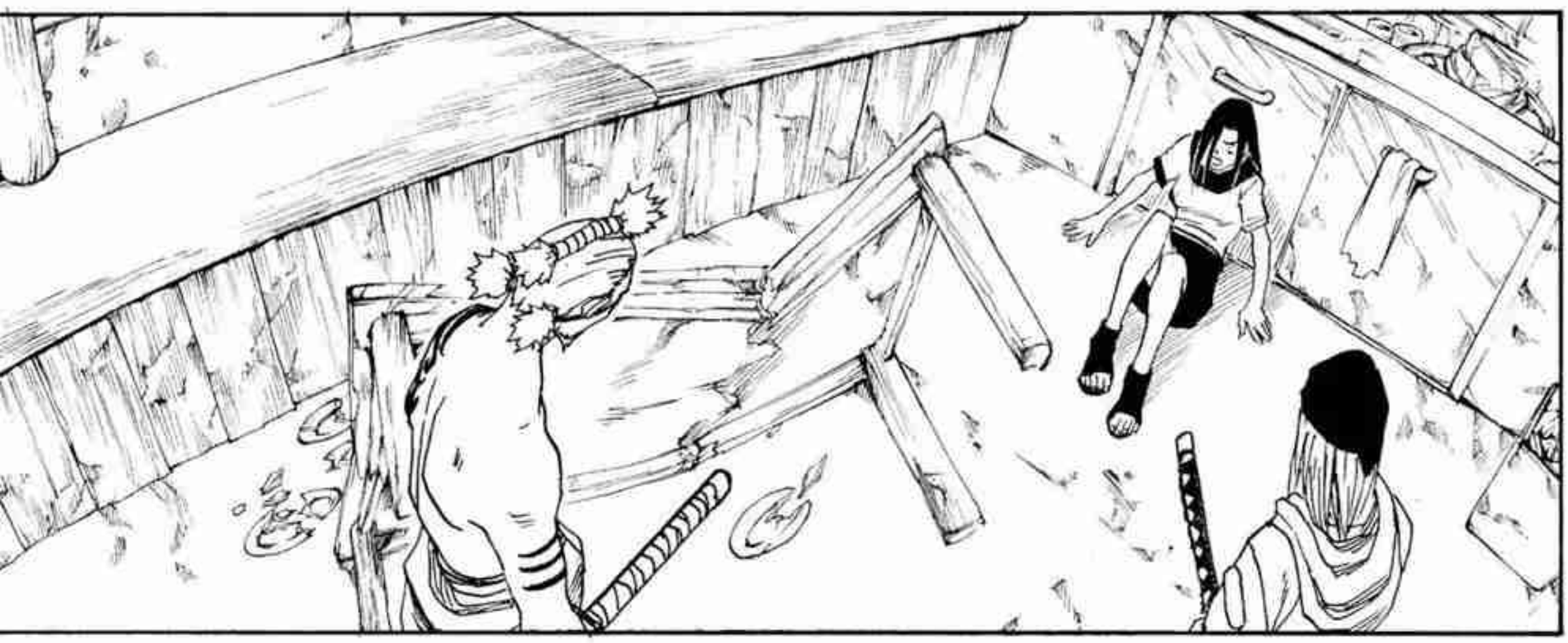
!

PEJ

TAK
!
TAK
OLD MAN TAZUNA'S DAUGHTER, HUH?
SORRY, BUT YOU'RE COMING WITH US.

CRASH
!!
AIEE-!!

SPLASH



RUN, INARI! DON'T COME IN!!!

WHAT DO YOU WANT, BRAT?!
MAMA!!

SHOULD WE GRAB HIM, TOO?
WE ONLY NEED ONE HOSTAGE.

-- FOR HIM!
HEH-HEH... TOO BAD --
KLAT

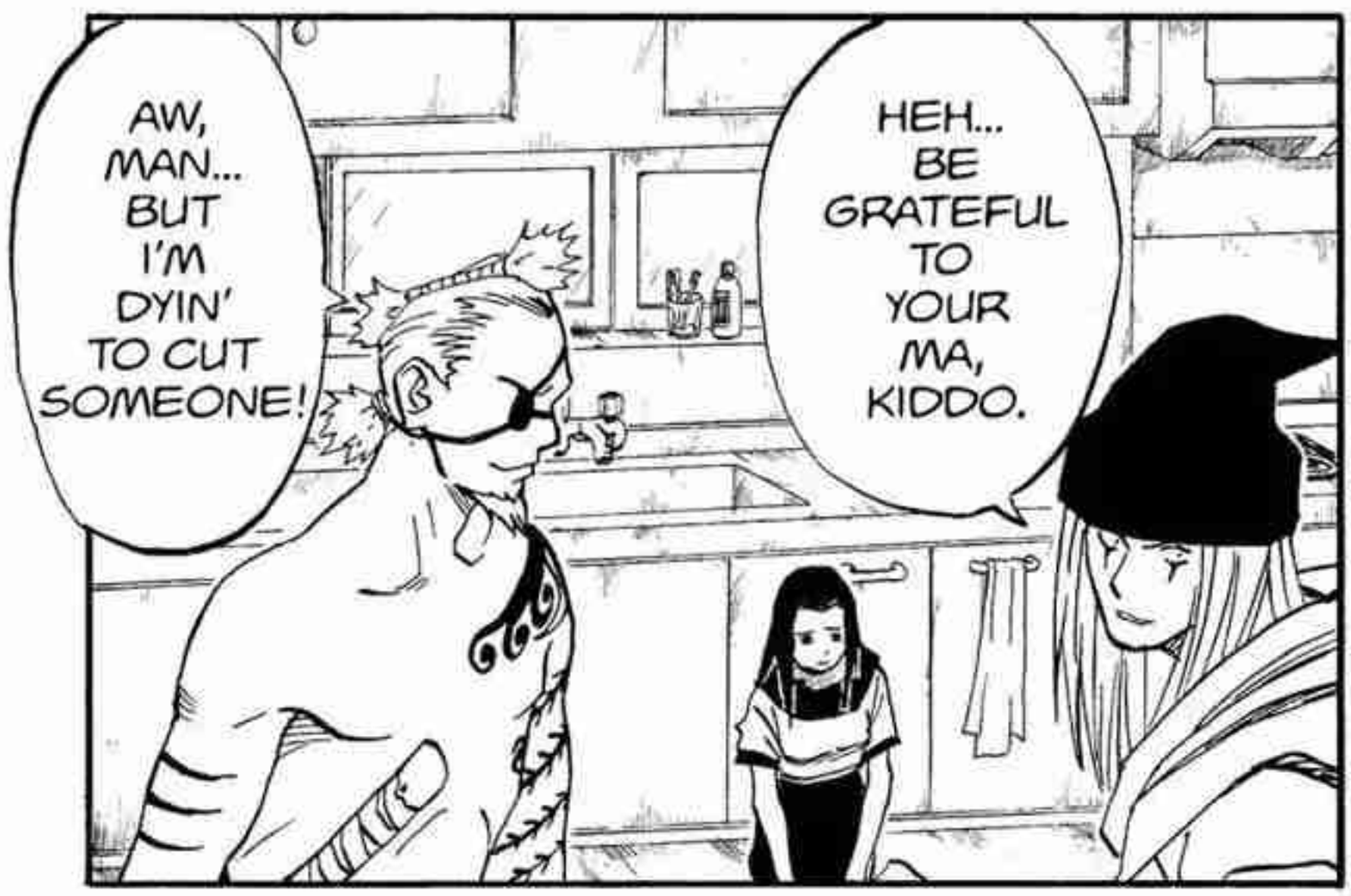
FLINCH
HOSTAGE...?!

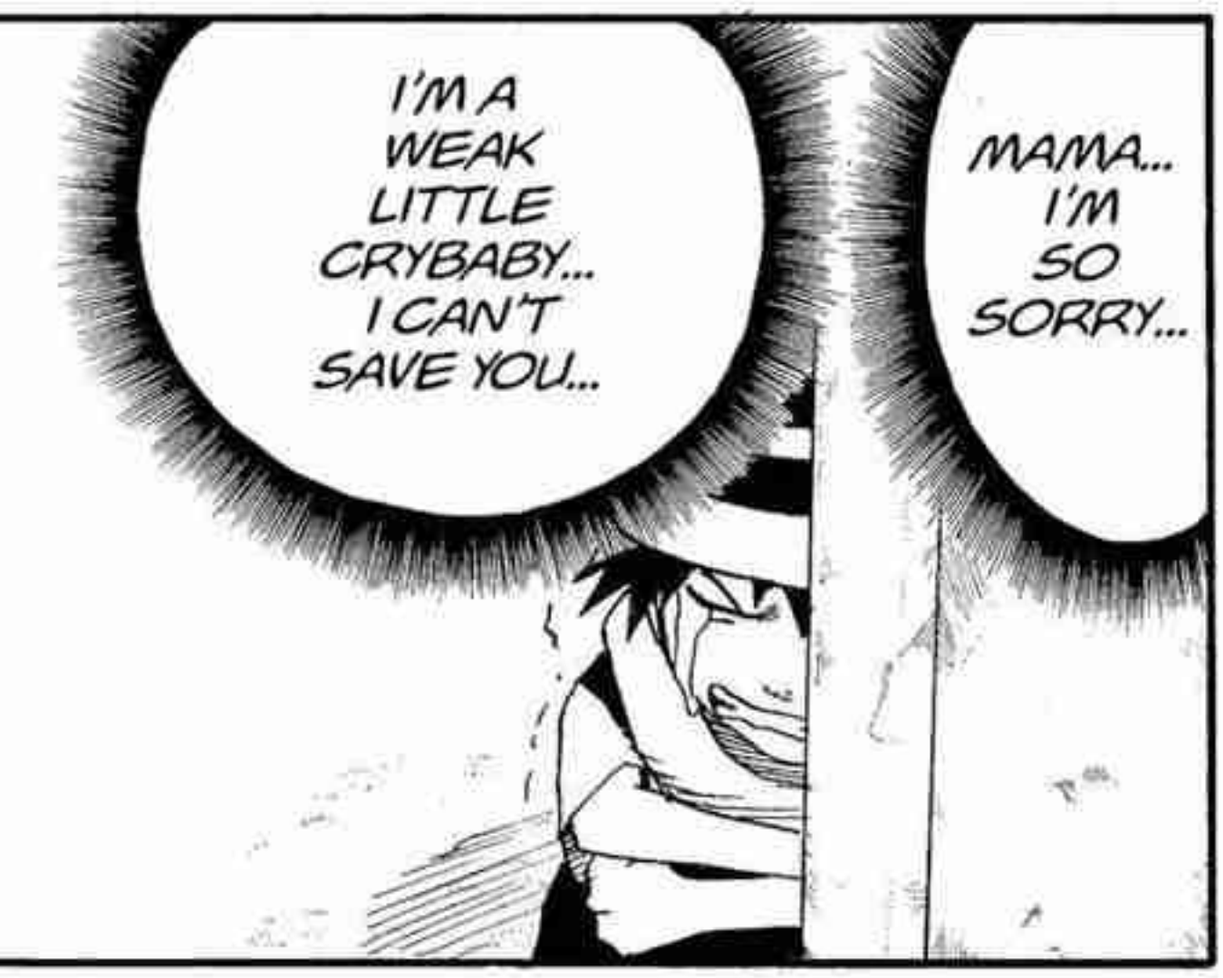
WAIT!!

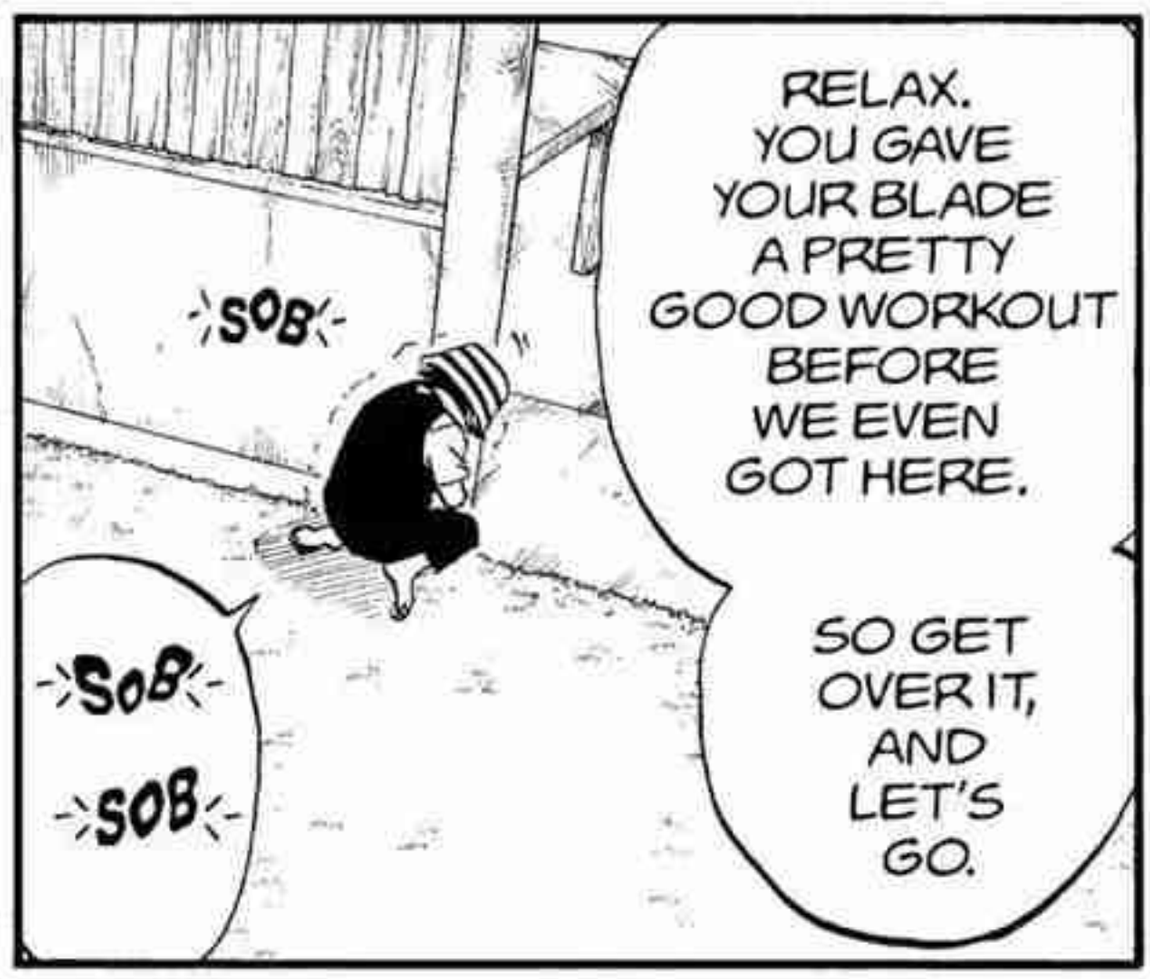
!!
SHIVER

THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR A LIVE HOSTAGE?

...IF YOU DARE TOUCH MY CHILD... I'LL BITE THROUGH MY TONGUE AND DROWN IN MY OWN BLOOD.


AW, MAN... BUT I'M DYIN' TO CUT SOMEONE!
HEH... BE GRATEFUL TO YOUR MA, KIDDO.

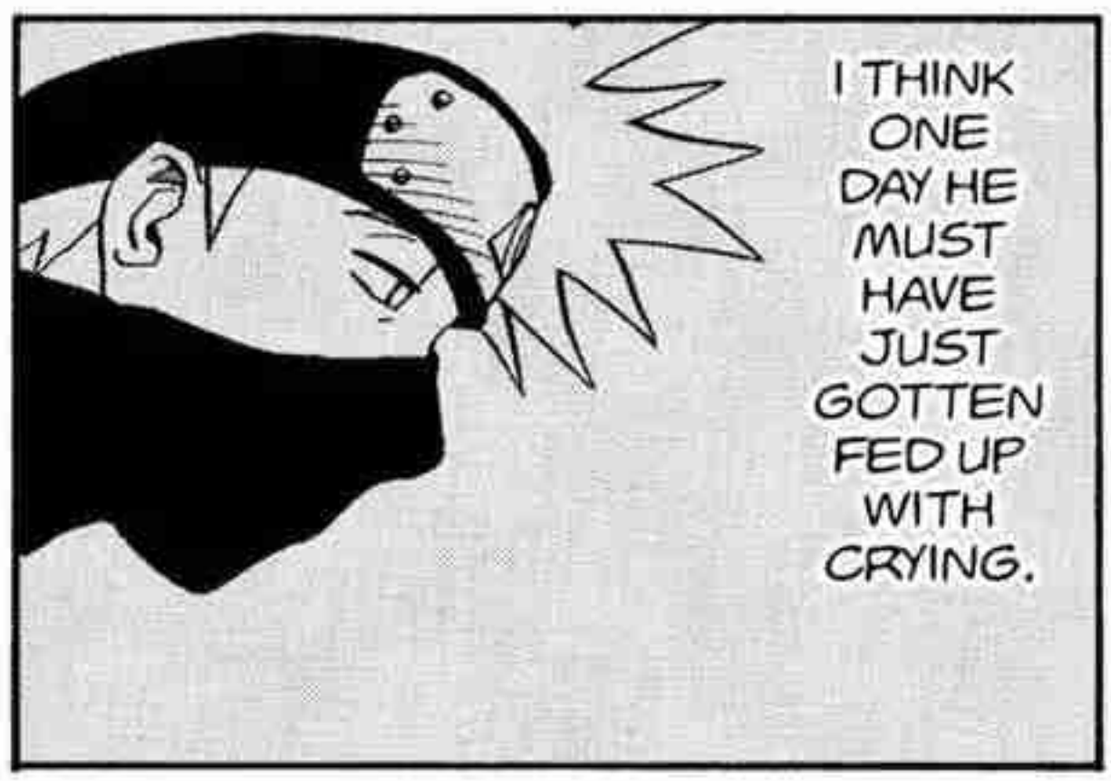

I'M A WEAK LITTLE CRYBABY... I CAN'T SAVE YOU...
MAMA... I'M SO SORRY...


SOB
SOB
SOB
RELAX. YOU GAVE YOUR BLADE A PRETTY GOOD WORKOUT BEFORE WE EVEN GOT HERE.
SO GET OVER IT, AND LET'S GO.

YOU BIG BABY!!

DRIP
DRIP

AND I'M AFRAID!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE!


I THINK ONE DAY HE MUST HAVE JUST GOTTEN FED UP WITH CRYING.

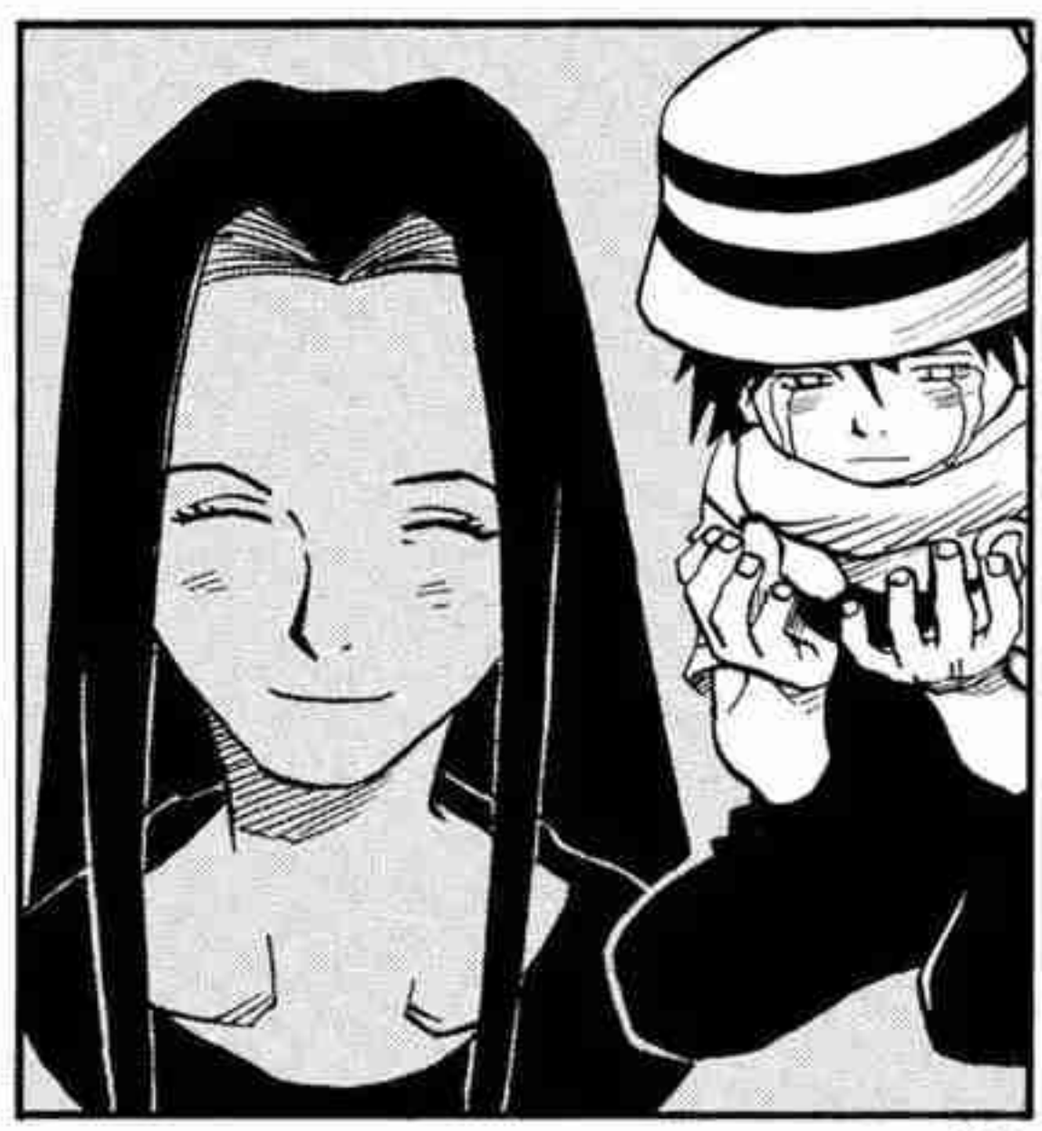
YOU FIGURE IT'S NOBLE TO STAR IN A MELODRAMA AND TREAT EVERYONE AROUND YOU LIKE GUESTS AT YOUR PITY PARTY?
...

HE UNDERSTANDS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE STRONG. HE KNOWS WHAT IT COSTS AND WHAT IT'S WORTH...
...JUST AS YOUR FATHER DID.

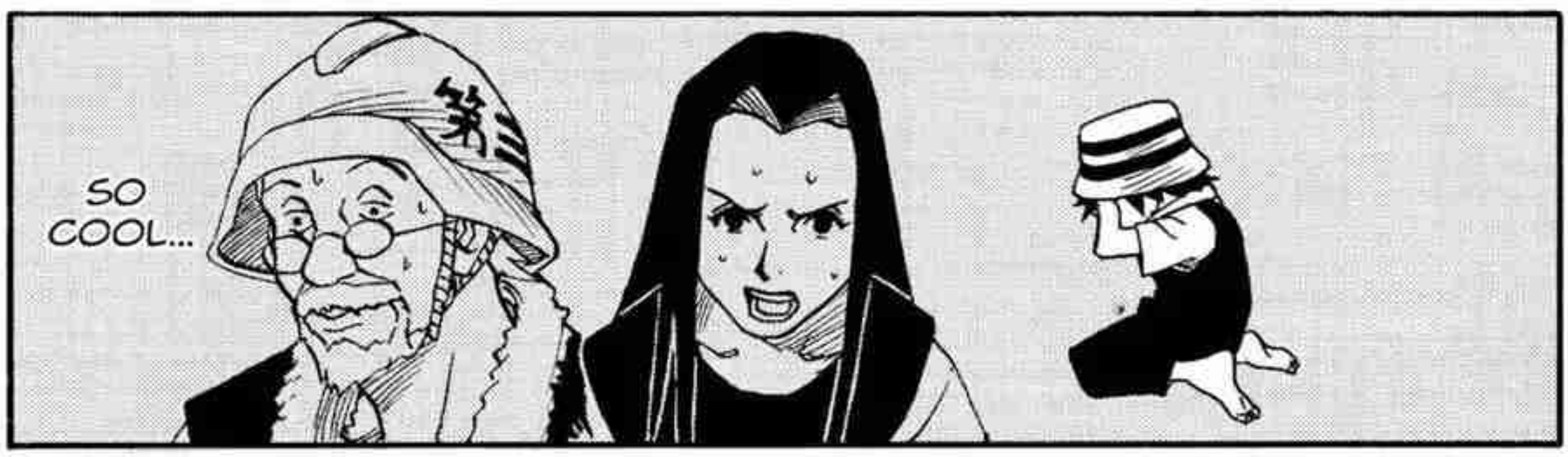
...

IT TAKES A REALLY BIG MAN TO SIT AROUND AND CRY... YOU BRAT!
YOU BIG BABY!!!!

...PROTECT IT WITH ALL THE STRENGTH YOU'VE GOT!...
IF SOMETHING IS PRECIOUS TO YOU...
...EVEN AT THE RISK OF YOUR OWN LIFE!



EVERYONE ELSE IS... SO AWESOME...


SO COOL...

...AND STRONG...

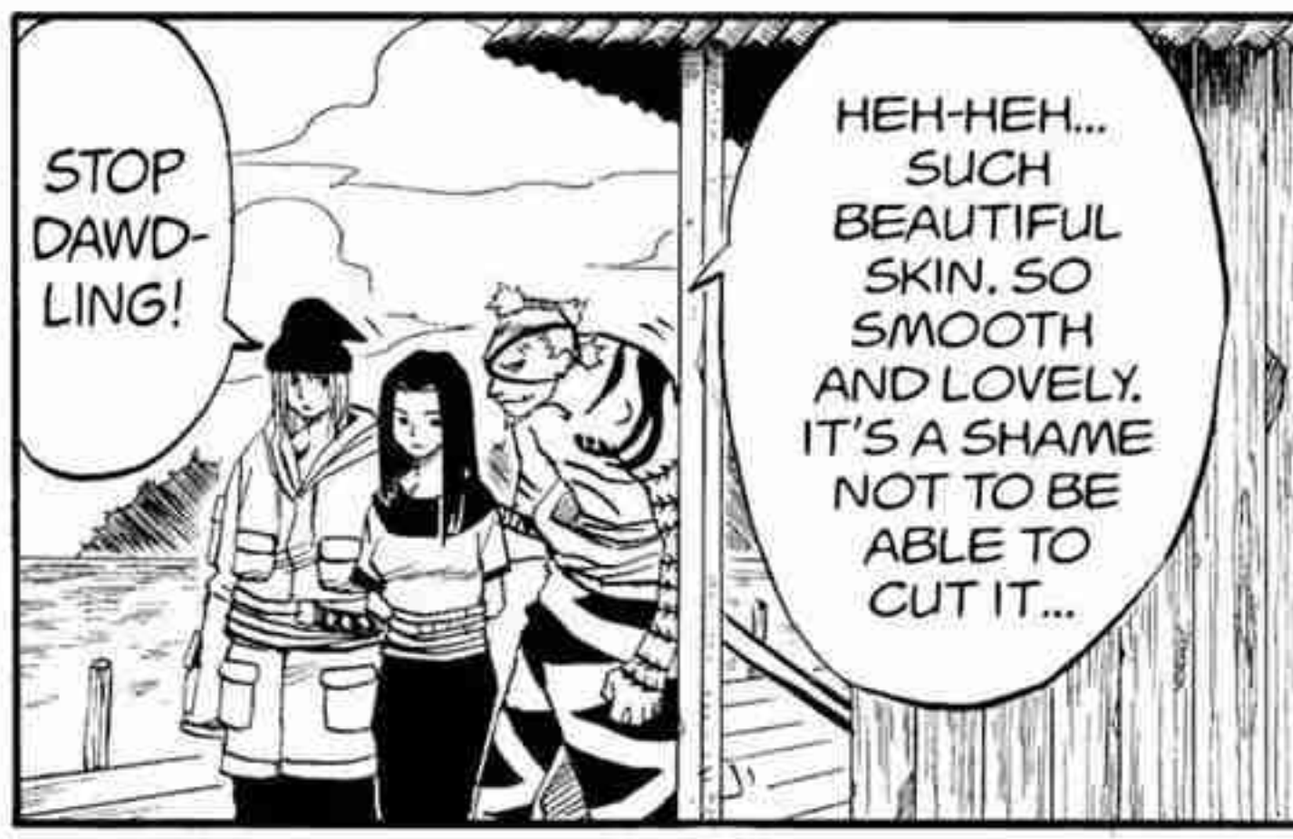
CLENCH
FAK!

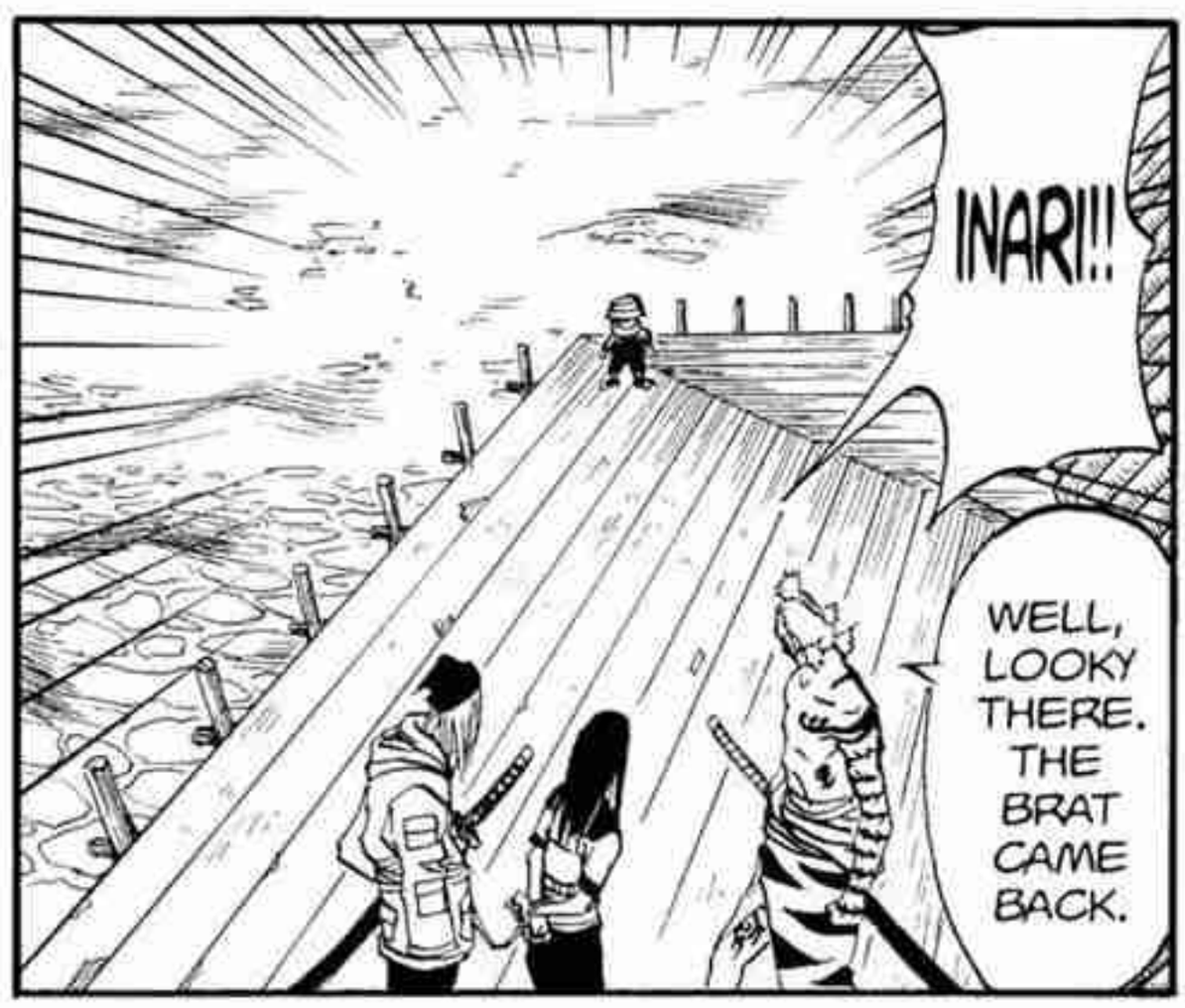
COULD I...

BE STRONG TOO...

...DADDY?!

...CAN I...

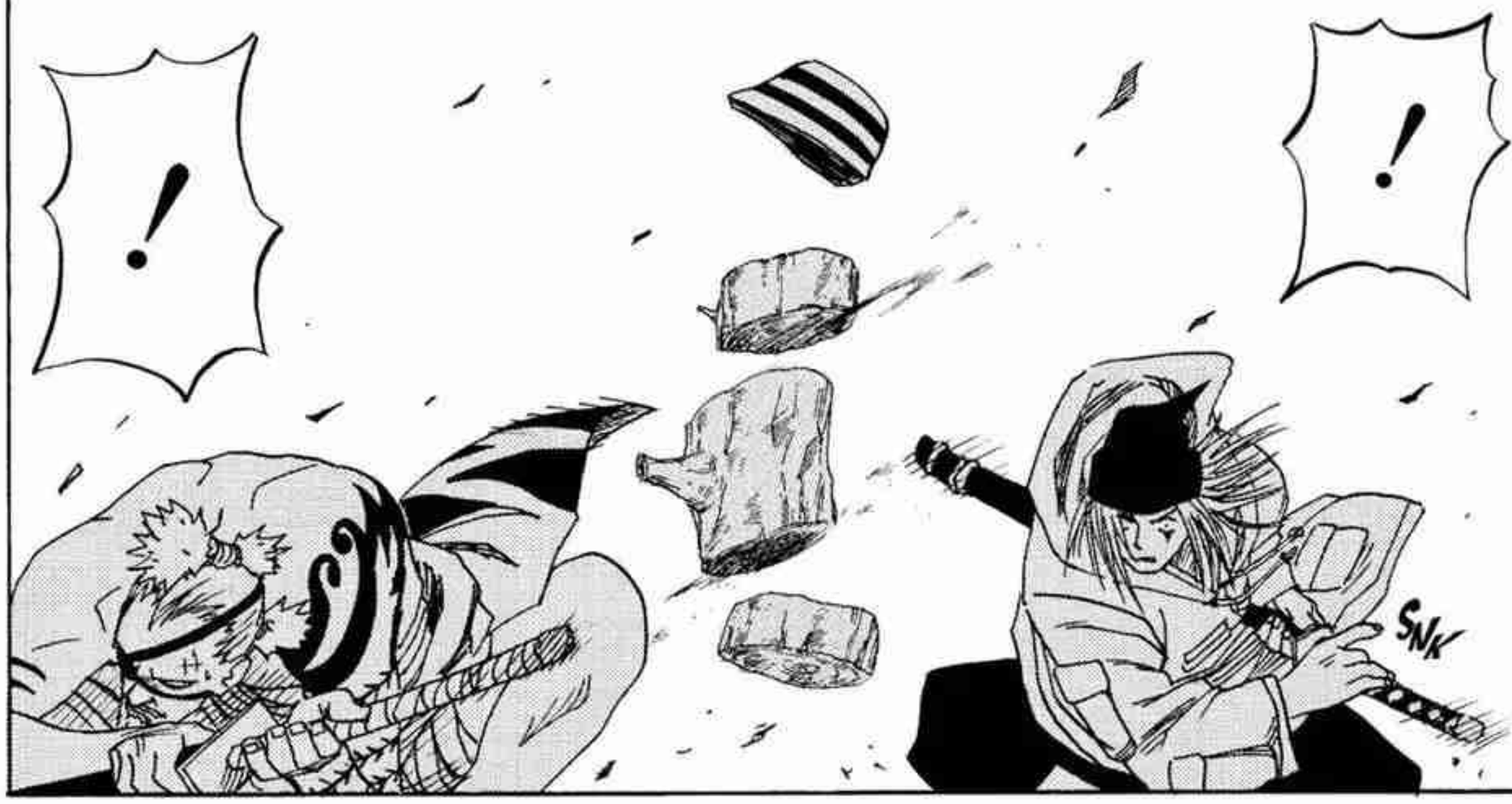




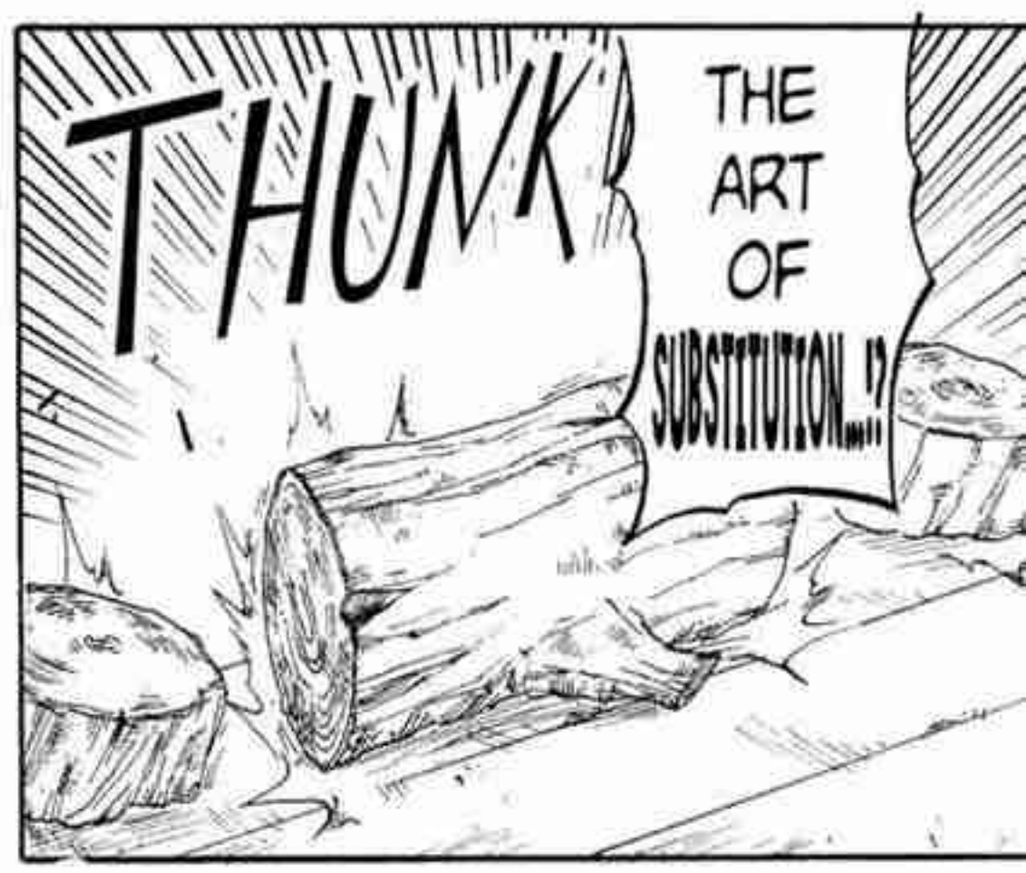
YOU GET AWAY FROM MY MAMA--!!

YES, I CAN...!!

Y...


!
!
SNK

SORRY I'M LATE.
!


THUNK
THE ART OF SUBSTITUTION...!?

WAY TO GO, INARI!!!

N-NARUTO...!
IT'S BEING A HERO, Y'KNOW? ALL THAT NICK OF TIME STUFF!

NARUTO! WILL YOU BE OKAY?
TAK
TAK

TAK
ONE OF TAZUNA'S CUT-RATE BODY-GUARDS?!
HEY! ISN'T THAT...
WHEN YOU DISTRACTED THEM, I WAS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR MOTHER!

HAH! YOU EXPECT THOSE TOYS TO AFFECT US?
PING
PING

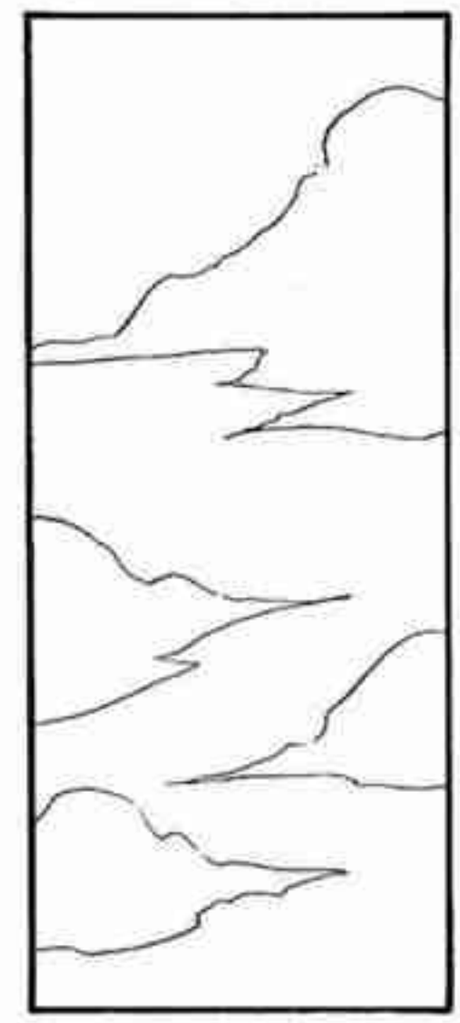
SHING
SHING

NO SWEAT.
KLIK

SUCKERS!

!
THERE WAS A STUCK PIG BACK IN THE FOREST, CUT TO RIBBONS WITH A SWORD...
...AND TREES WITH FRESH DEEP SLASHES IN THEIR BARK, GOING IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR HOUSE. WASN'T TOO HARD TO FIGURE OUT... I GOT WORRIED.

HUNH--?
NARUTO... HOW'D YOU KNOW THOSE SAMURAI WERE COMING?



WHY?
WELL, UMMM...

INARI... I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY.
!

BUT FORGET THAT...

!
BAP

I'M SORRY I CALLED YOU A BABY.
AND IT'S NOT TRUE. OKAY?

YOU'RE A BIG, STRONG BOY--!

HUH?

NO WAY!!
...

THAT BOY IS NO LONGER YOUR DEMON FOX!
HE IS... A CITIZEN OF KONOHAGAKURE VILLAGE...

...FOR HIM, I HAVE NOTHING BUT RESPECT.
HE'S AN EXCELLENT STUDENT.

?

...

...UZUMAKI NARUTO!

NOTHING WRONG WITH CRYING...

...WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY!

IF THEY ATTACKED US HERE, IT MEANS THE BRIDGE IS PROBABLY A TARGET, TOO!

SO-

WOW!
NARUTO ...I WISH YOU WERE MY BIG BROTHER...

YEAH...
...
WIPE
WIPE

YOU CAN HANDLE THINGS HERE, RIGHT?

YOU BET!
SWIPE
MAN, THIS "HERO" THING IS A LOT OF WORK!!
CLENCH

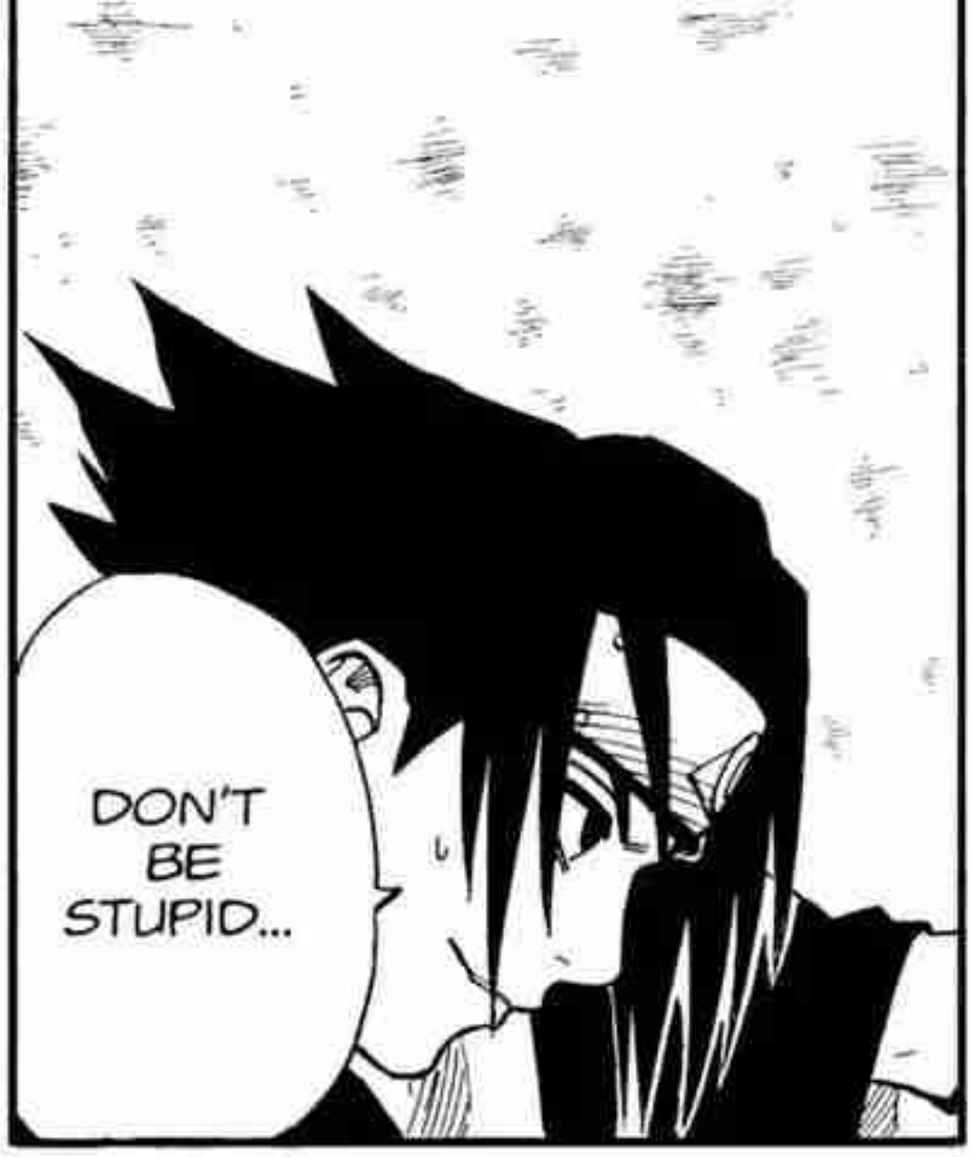
Number 24: Speed!!

CLASH

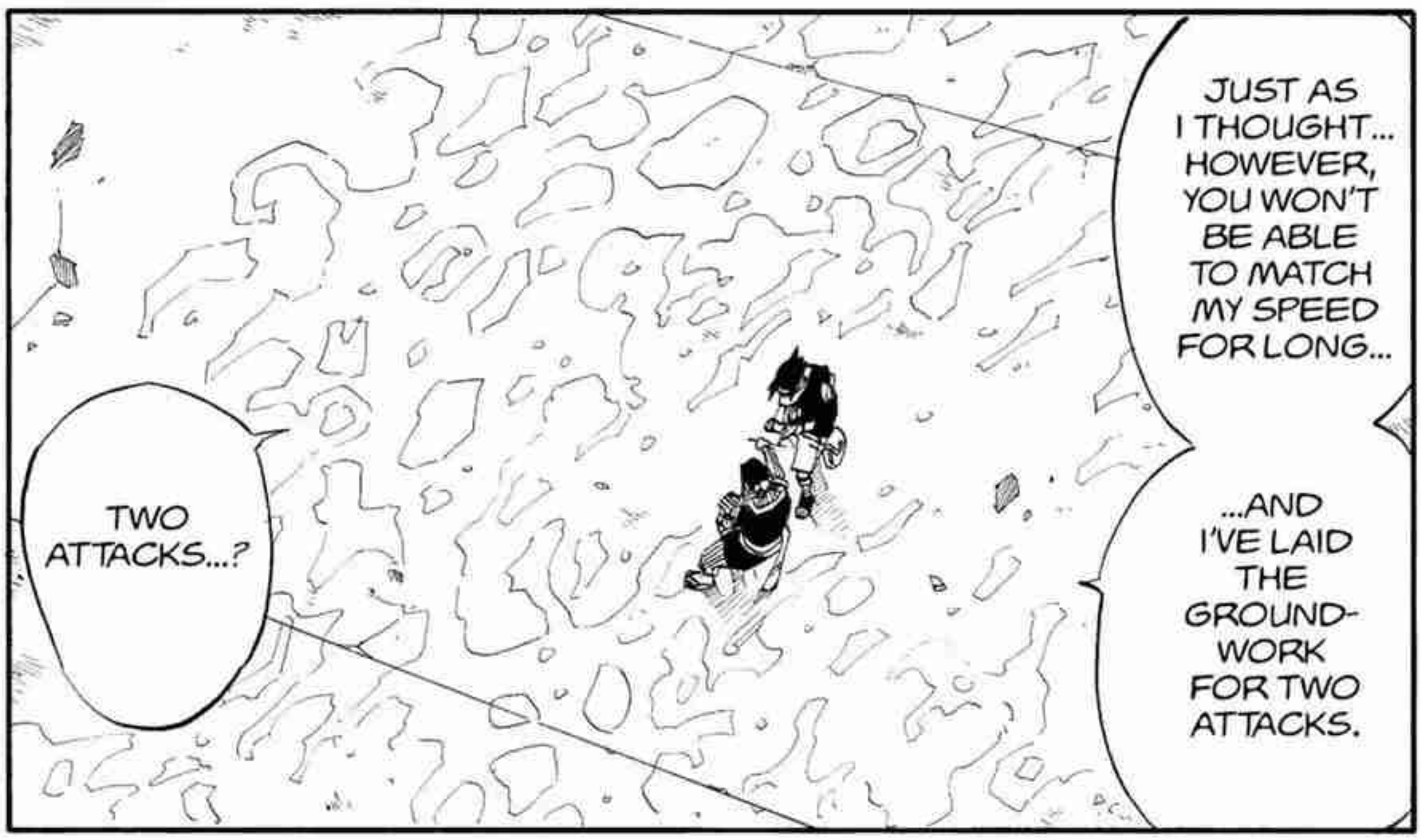
LET SASUKE HANDLE HAKU.
SAKURA! WE HAVE TO COVER MR. TAZUNA. TAKE THAT SIDE, AND STAY CLOSE!
YES, SIR!
SPLAT
PAK

HE CAN KEEP UP WITH HAKU'S SPEED.
AHA...

HMM...


DON'T BE STUPID...

YOU PROBABLY WON'T LEAVE QUIETLY, WILL YOU?...
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO KILL YOU, BUT...


TWO ATTACKS...?
JUST AS I THOUGHT... HOWEVER, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MATCH MY SPEED FOR LONG...
...AND I'VE LAID THE GROUND-WORK FOR TWO ATTACKS.

...WHICH LEAVES YOU ONLY ONE HAND FREE TO DEFEND YOURSELF FROM MY ATTACKS!

FIRSTLY, THERE'S THE WATER SPLASHED ALL AROUND US. SECONDLY, I'VE TRAPPED ONE OF YOUR HANDS WITH PARRYING THIS MOVE...
KREE
KREE

WITH JUST ONE HAND, HE'S...!!
WHAT?!!

HE'S MAKING SIGNS WITH JUST ONE HAND?! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT...

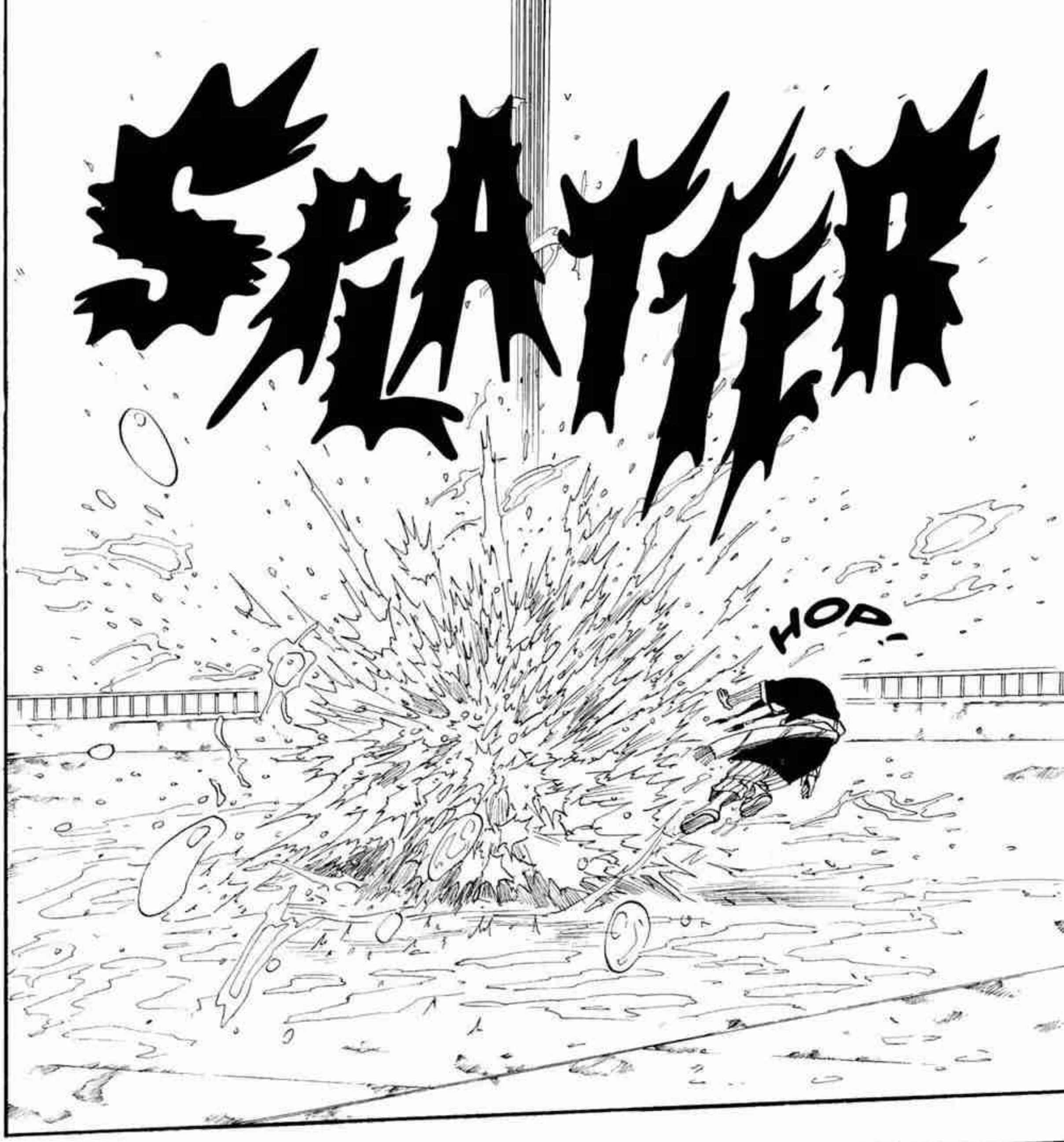
FWUP
FWUP
FWUP

STAMP
STAMP

SECRET ART OF WATER!
THE THOUSAND STINGING NEEDLES OF DEATH!

ZAPP!
ZIPP

READ THIS WAY


SPLATTER
HOP

WHERE DID HE...?!
SPLAT

!

!
THUK THUK THUK
CHINNNG!
HOP
!!
YOU'RE NOT THAT FAST.
SPLASH
THOK
NOW YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS TO WORRY...
...ABOUT DEFENDING YOURSELF FROM MY ATTACKS.

KASHING
SLASH
!

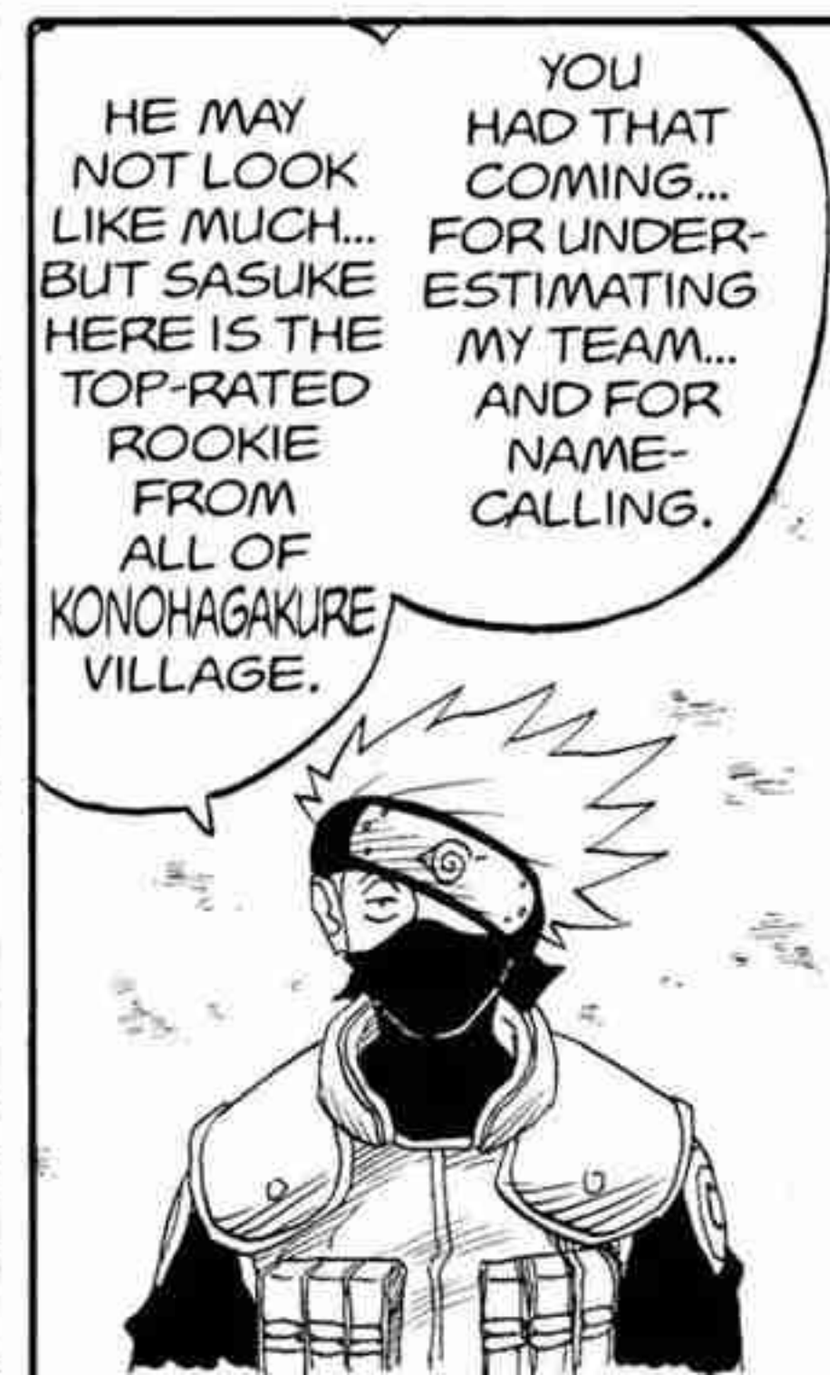
SWUP
FLIP
...H... HE'S FAST...!!
WHIP

HAKU... IS ACTUALLY LOSING A BATTLE OF SPEED?!
WHAT...?!
POW

YOU'RE FAST. I'M FASTER.
SKID
UHN!

...LET'S NOT FORGET OUR OWN COMEDY NINJA - THE MAVERICK SHOW-STOPPER, THE ONE AND ONLY NARUTO!
AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST...
AH-CHOO!

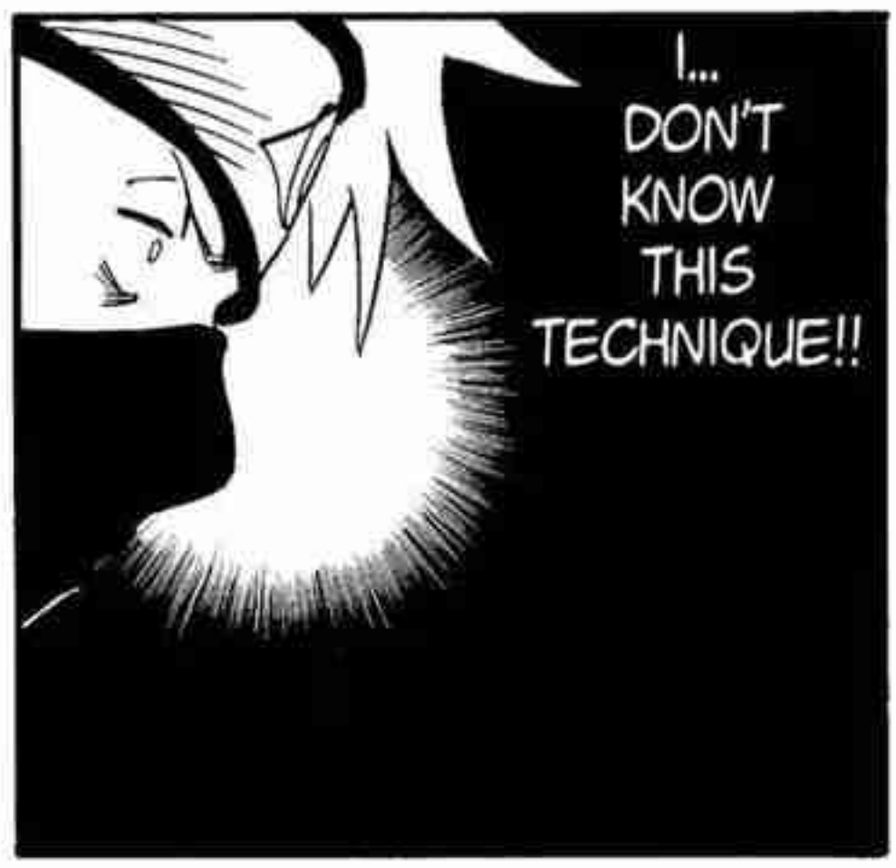
AND SAKURA HERE IS OUR SHARPEST MIND...
OH, YESSS!
INNER SAKURA
THAT'S FOR SURE!
OH


HE MAY NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH... BUT SASUKE HERE IS THE TOP-RATED ROOKIE FROM ALL OF KONOHAGAKURE VILLAGE.
YOU HAD THAT COMING... FOR UNDER-ESTIMATING MY TEAM... AND FOR NAME-CALLING.

HAKU... DO YOU UNDERSTAND, IF THIS GOES ON, YOU COULD END UP DYING AT THE HANDS OF THE VERY PERSON YOU SOUGHT TO SPARE?
?
HEH HEH HEH...
HEH HEH HEH HEH...
....DOES THE AIR SUDDENLY FEEL SO... COLD?
WH... WHY...
WHAT A PITY.
YES, I DO...
KRINKLE
PLIT
SPLISH
!
SHIN
RHSE

SECRET ART OF WATER...

ICE
CRYSTAL
MAGIC
MIRROR
TECHNIQUE!


I... DON'T KNOW THIS TECHNIQUE!!

GLEAM

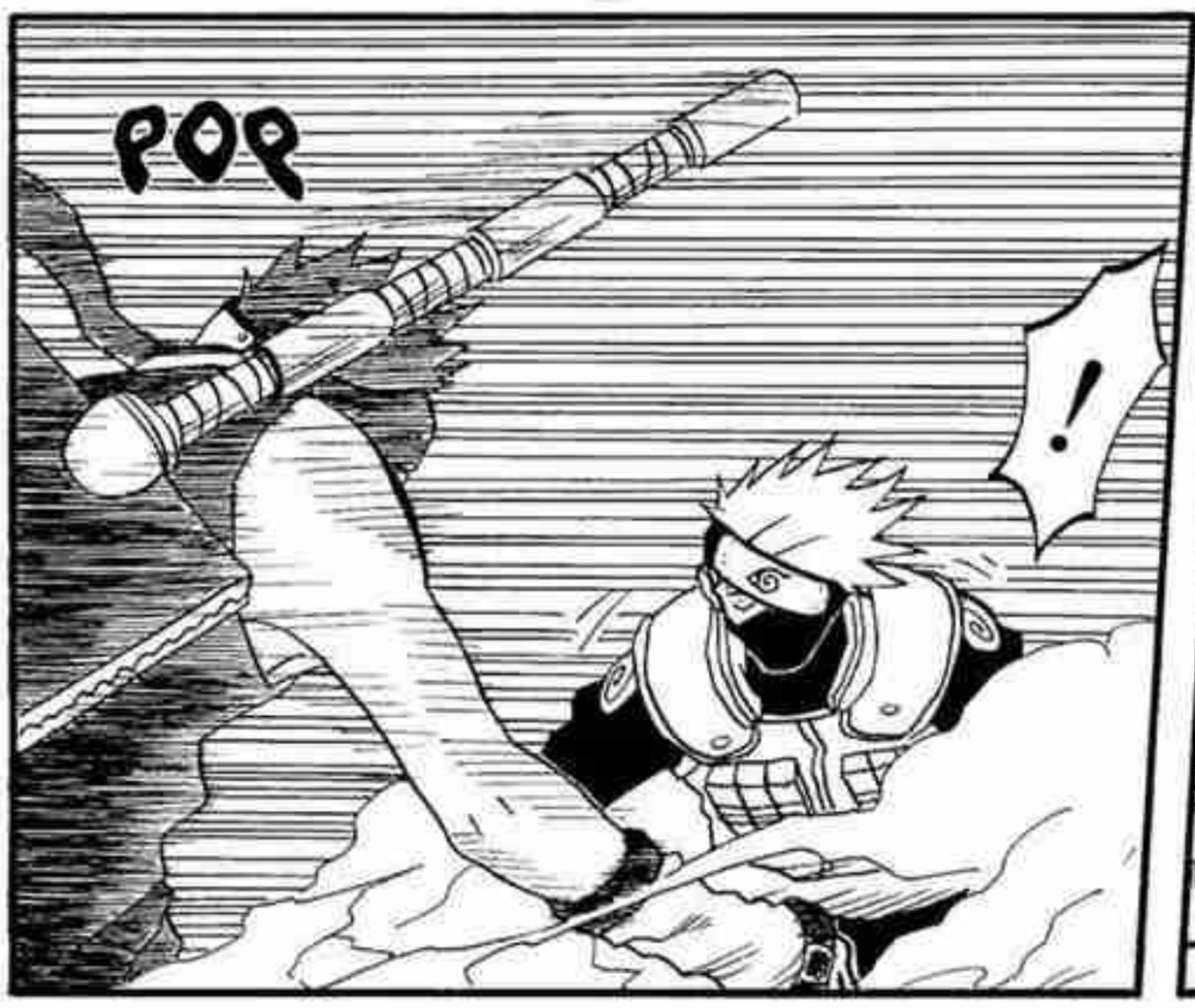
SPLASH

SLUUUU

!
WHA...?

GLIN
SHM
POP

!
POP
POP
POP
POP
POP


POP
!

HOP
BLAST!

ON
LET'S NOT FORGET...
I'M YOUR ENEMY.

WHAT'S HE PLANNING TO DO WITH THESE MIRRORS?
...LET ME SHOW YOU SOME REAL SPEED!
NOW THAT IT'S ALL IN PLACE...
OUR CHILDREN CAN PLAY TOGETHER... WHILE MY BOY KILLS YOURS.
NO...

!
OWW!!!

GRAB

SLASH
AUUGH!!
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH

SASUKE...!!

SASUKE!!

YOU...!!

ANY SUDDEN MOVES AND I'LL KILL THOSE OTHER TWO!!

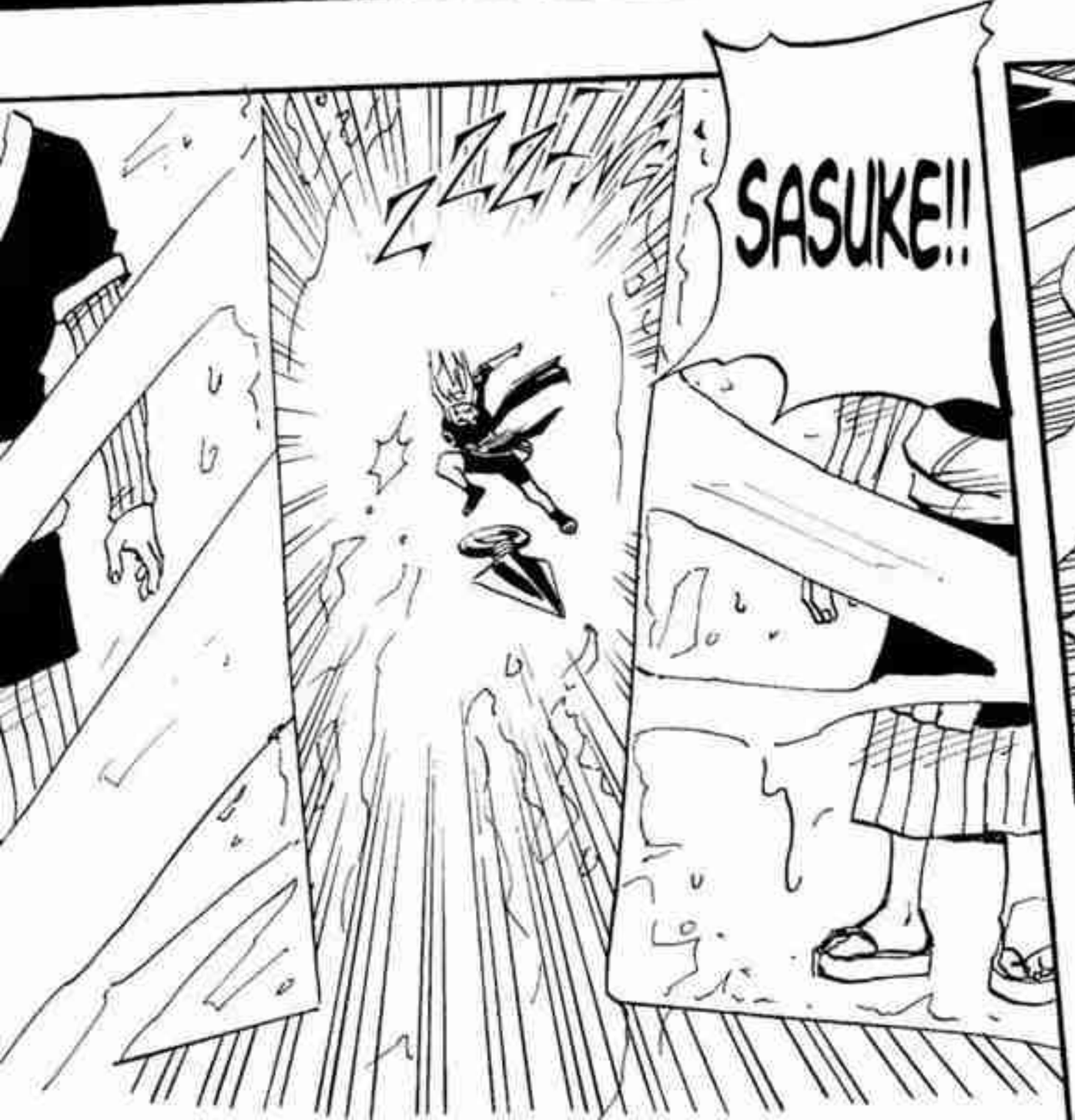
AAAARGH··!!

MR. TAZUNA, I'M SORRY... BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO LEAVE YOU FOR JUST A LITTLE BIT.

...

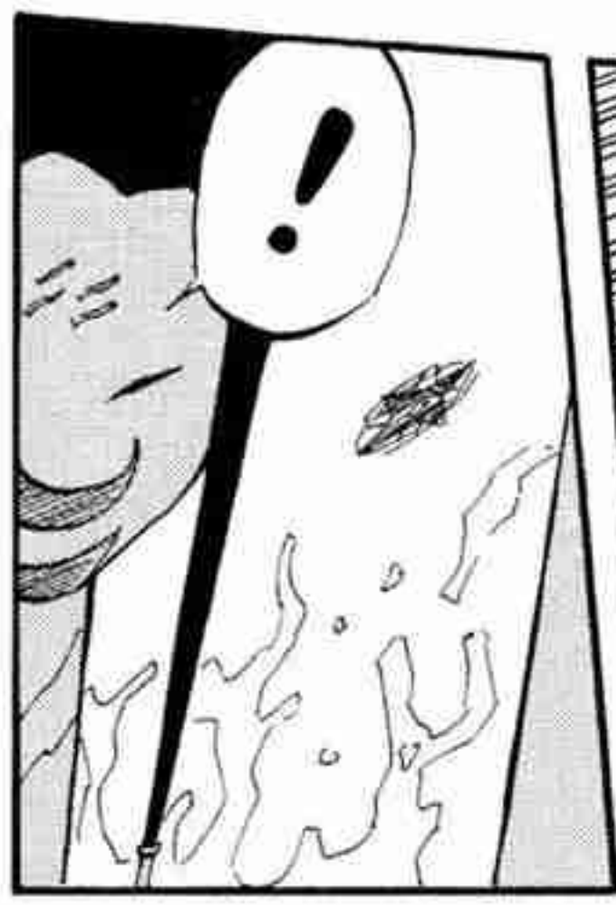
GGH-- GYAAGGH!

!!

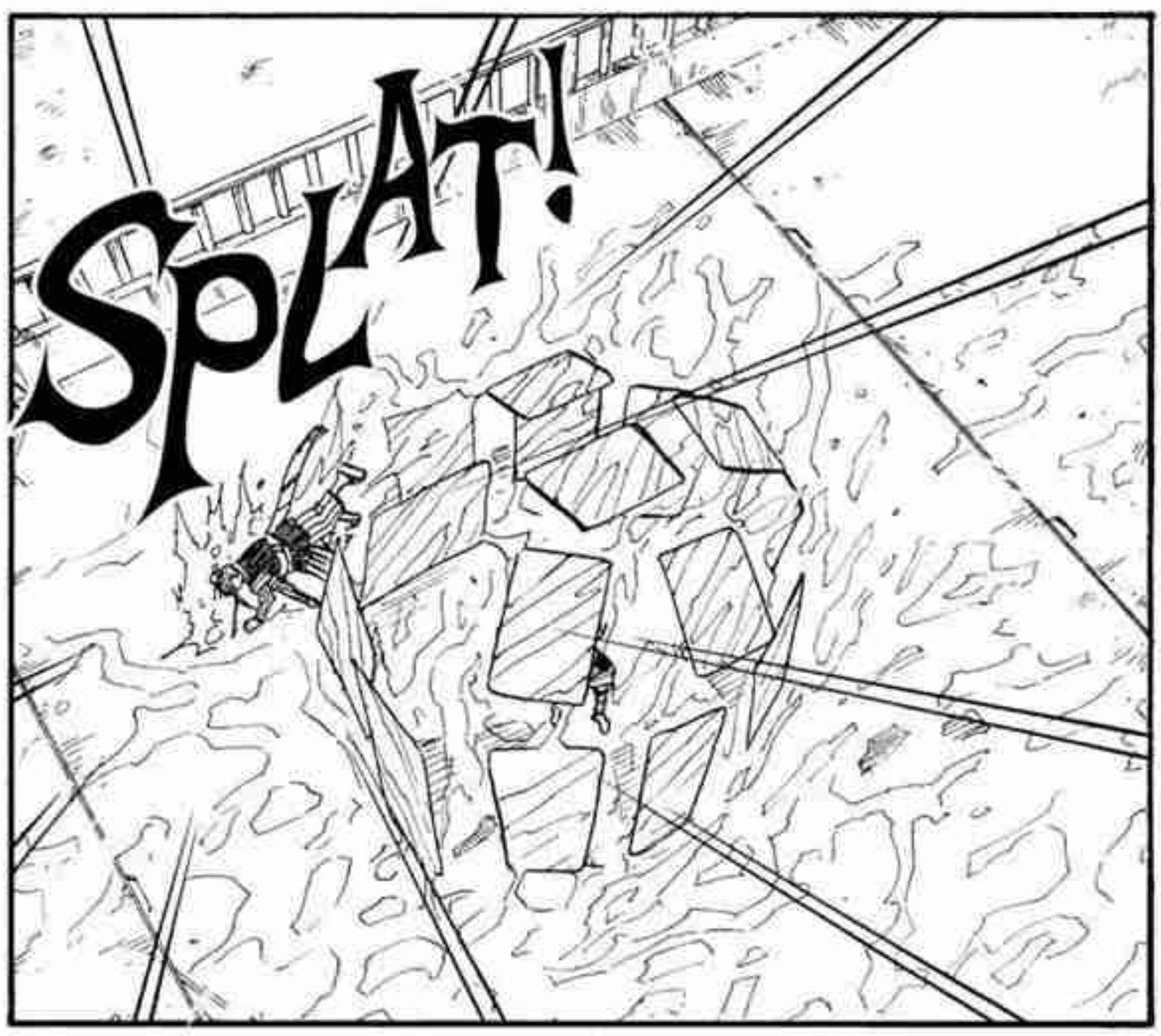


POP
GRAB

!!


!

!!
HE CAUGHT IT!!

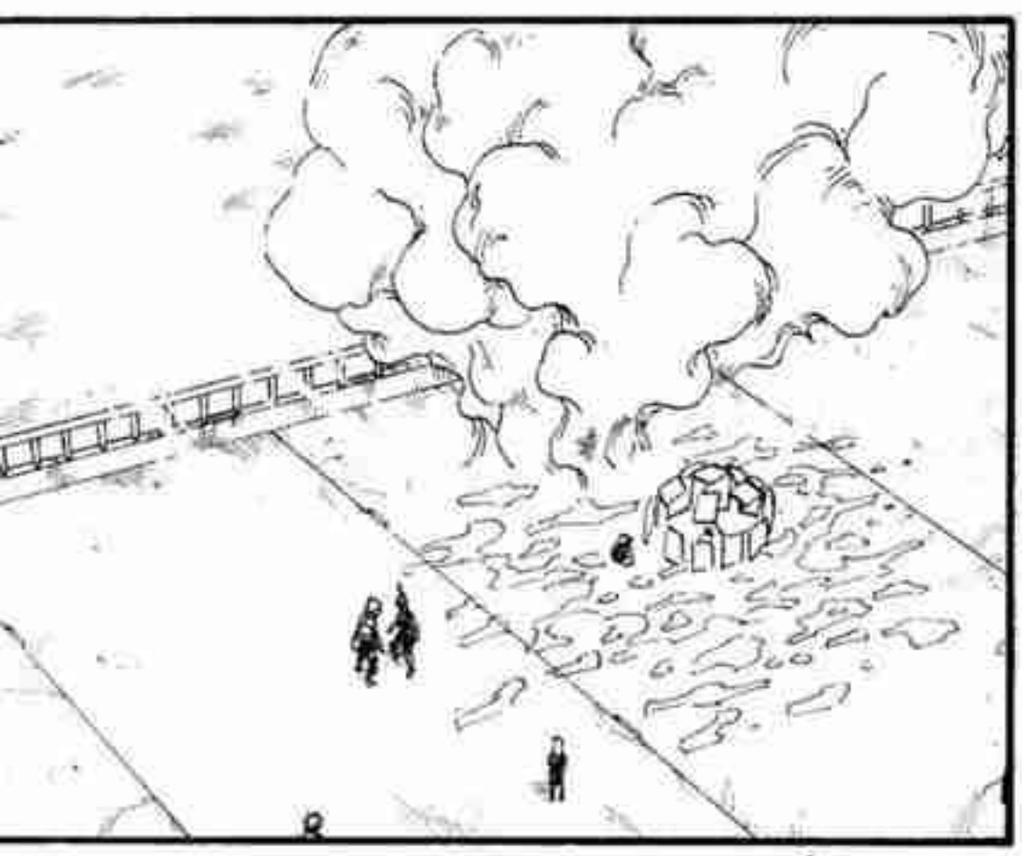

SPLAT!

CHOK
SLUP
UGH!

DOONN

...WHO...?

!



...THE MAVERICK SHOW-STOPPER...
COMEDY NINJA...?!

...SHOW-OFF...
THAT IDIOT...

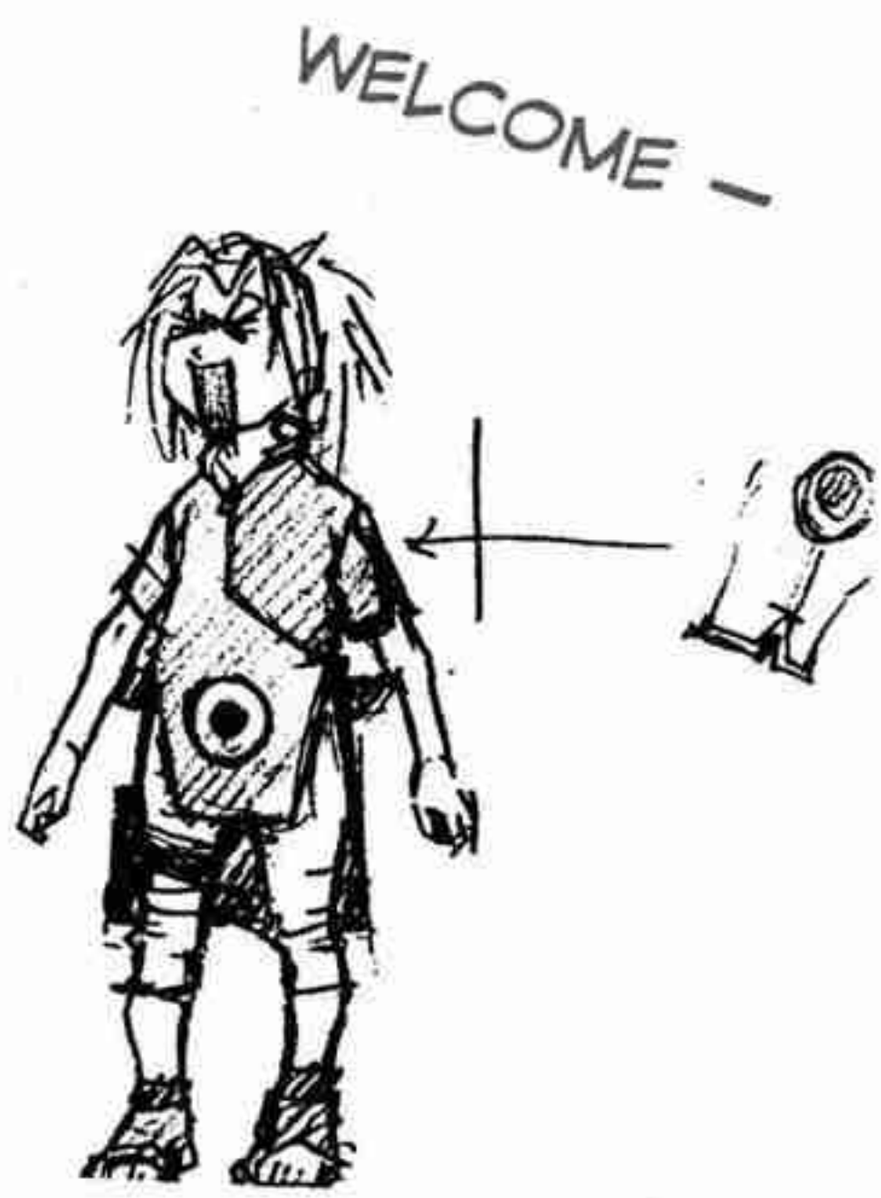
AT YOUR SERVICE!!
UZUMAKI NARUTO!

HARUNO SAKURA

EARLY CHARACTER DESIGNS

This was how I first imagined Sakura. Let's face it...she's really not that cute, is she? Especially back then! But that was mostly because I'm not that good with female characters in general, so making one of them cute is always a big challenge for me.

When my editor, those around me, and even my own staff saw this design and read her personality profile, they all assured me that Sakura was "far from cute"! Heh-heh...



But I have my own reasons for being especially fond of Sakura, both in how she's designed, and in her personality. I believe everyone possesses an "Inner Sakura" type voice in their heart, including things like her entirely arbitrary choice of love object. I think it gives her a real humanity that's pretty sweet.

There's a lot more to being a good female manga character than just cuteness, you know....At least, that's my excuse. The troublemakers and the curmudgeons I can draw without breaking a sweat... but girls are really hard!

Number 25: For Your Dreams...!!

YOU KNOW HOW THE STORY GOES. THINGS LOOK BLEAK... TILL THE HERO ARRIVES --

HERE I AM, TO SAVE THE DAY.

WHAT WE NEEDED WAS AN AMBUSH. INSTEAD, HE ALL BUT PAINTS A TARGET ON HIMSELF!

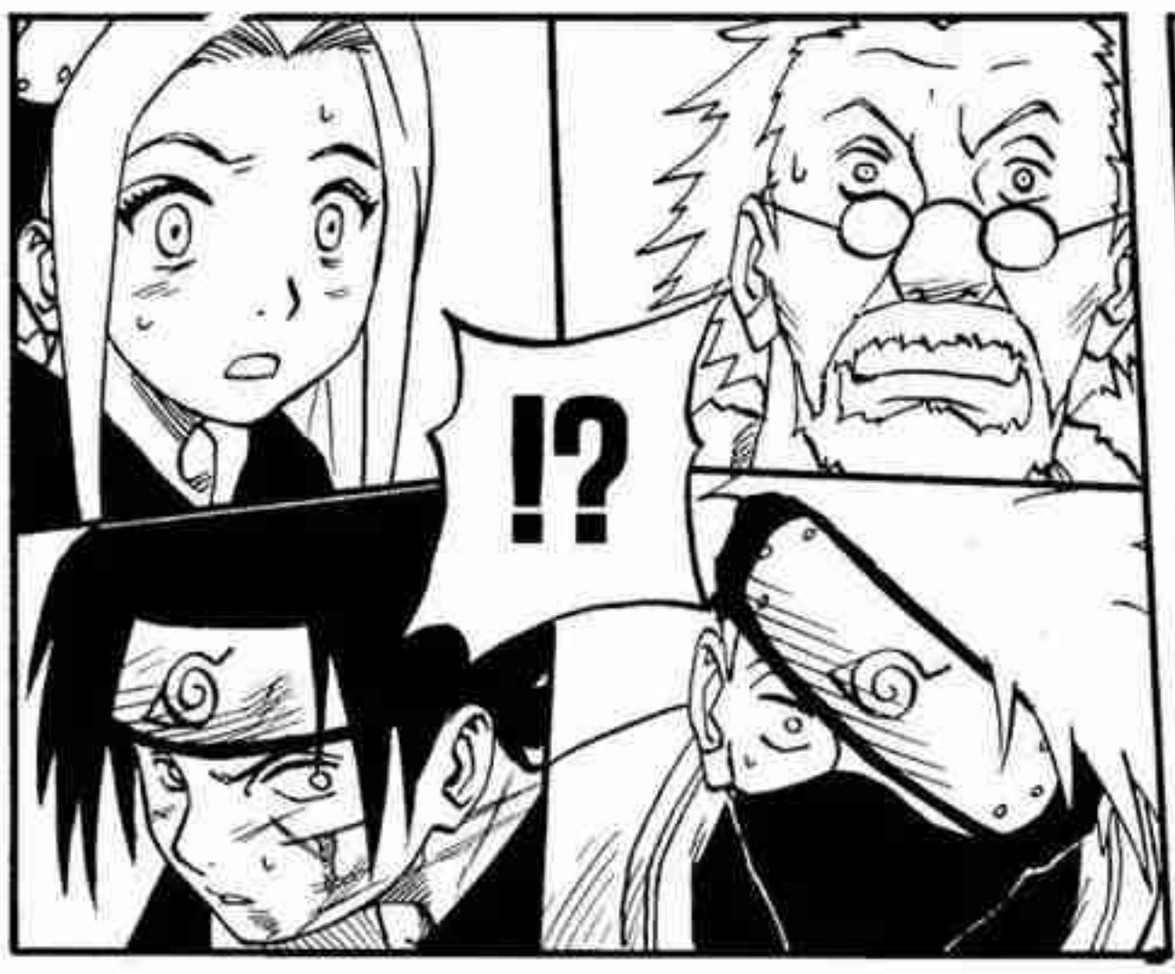
EXASPERATING LITTLE --!

AND THEN - **POW!!** - BYE-BYE BAD GUYS!

READ THIS WAY
HEH
TO BUILD UP MY STRENGTH!
TRAINING!!
BLAST!
FWIP
FLIP
FLIP
!
HERE IT COMES!!
!
FWIP
FWIP
SHF
FWIP

CHING CHING CHING CHING CHING CHING

!



HOW CHARMINGLY NAÏVE OF YOU... AS USUAL...
SO, YOU WANT ME TO KEEP MY HANDS OFF HIM, EH, HAKU?

...

I DON'T EVEN SEE HIM MOVE. HE STRIKES BEFORE I CAN SPOT HIS WEAPONS' TRAJECTORY!
BUT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT TECHNIQUE HE'S USING! HIS DOPPEL-GANGERS ALL HIDE WITHIN THE MIRRORS AND THEN STRIKE SIMULTANEOUSLY!

LOOK AT ME... IT'S LIKE I'M BEING CUT TO RIBBONS BY A THOUSAND NEEDLES...
...BUT THE CUTS ARE ALL SUPERFICIAL. HE'S KILLING ME BY INCHES... SAVING THE VITAL TARGETS, AND THE DEATHBLOW, FOR LATER.
THAT GUY... NAÏVE? YEAH, RIGHT!

LOOKS LIKE MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE BATTLE HERE...
AND TRUST NARUTO TO SET ME FREE FROM OUTSIDE....

WHATEVER IS GOING ON, THE MIRRORS MUST BE THE KEY!
IT CAN'T JUST BE THE ART OF THE DOPPEL-GANGER... THE ICE MIRRORS ARE A PART OF THIS, SOMEHOW, BUT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT THEIR SIGNIFICANCE!

TA-DAA!!

!!!

FLIP

YO! SASUKE! I'M HERE TO RESCUE YOU!

SHLOOP
!
!

SHUK

!!
OVER HERE.

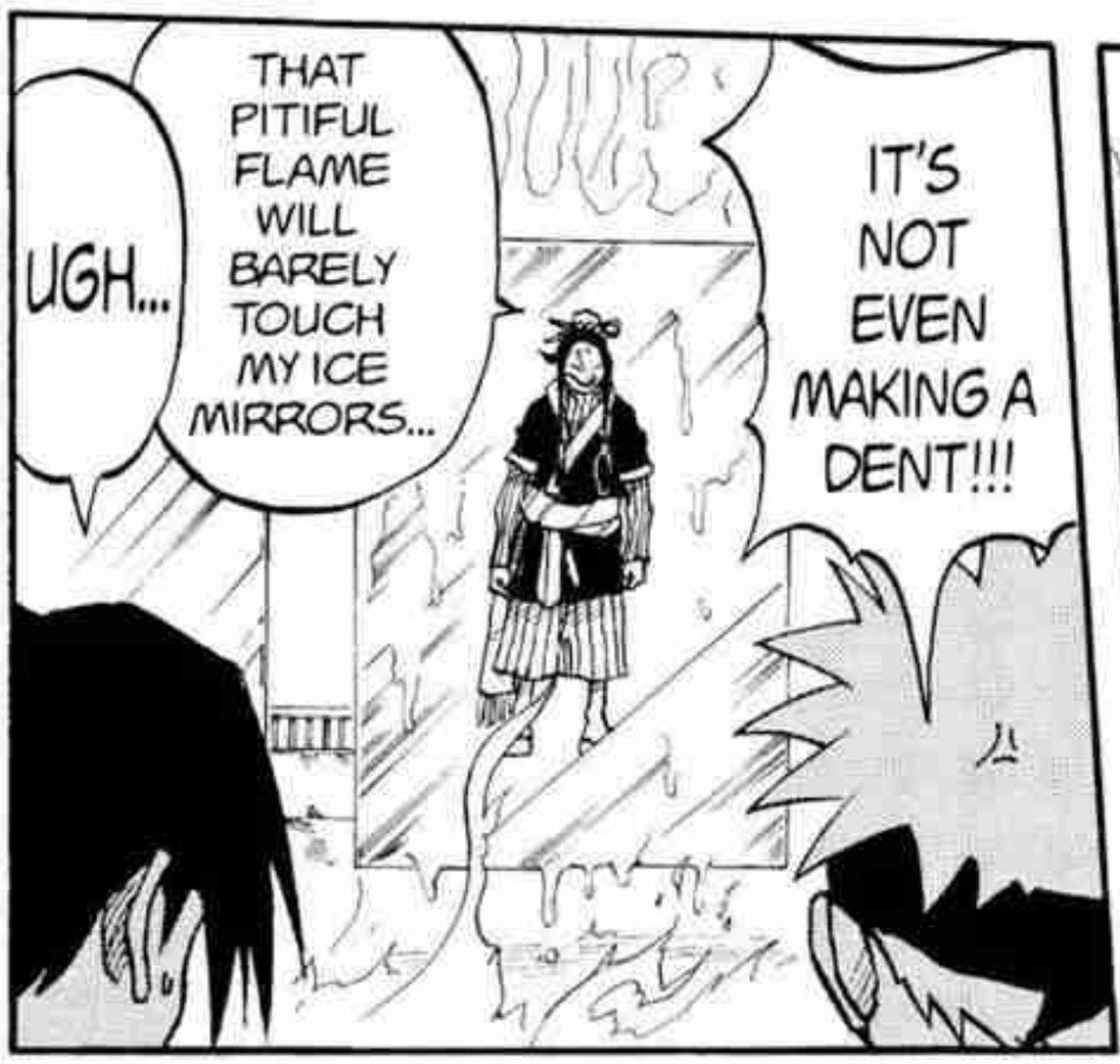
SO THAT'S IT! HIS REAL BODY IS OVER THERE!
POK

FIRE STYLE!
THESE ARE MIRRORS MADE OF ICE, SO...

WH-WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!!
DESTROYING ALL THE MIRRORS MAY BE OUR ONLY HOPE!
LOOKS LIKE...
BAM

HUNH?

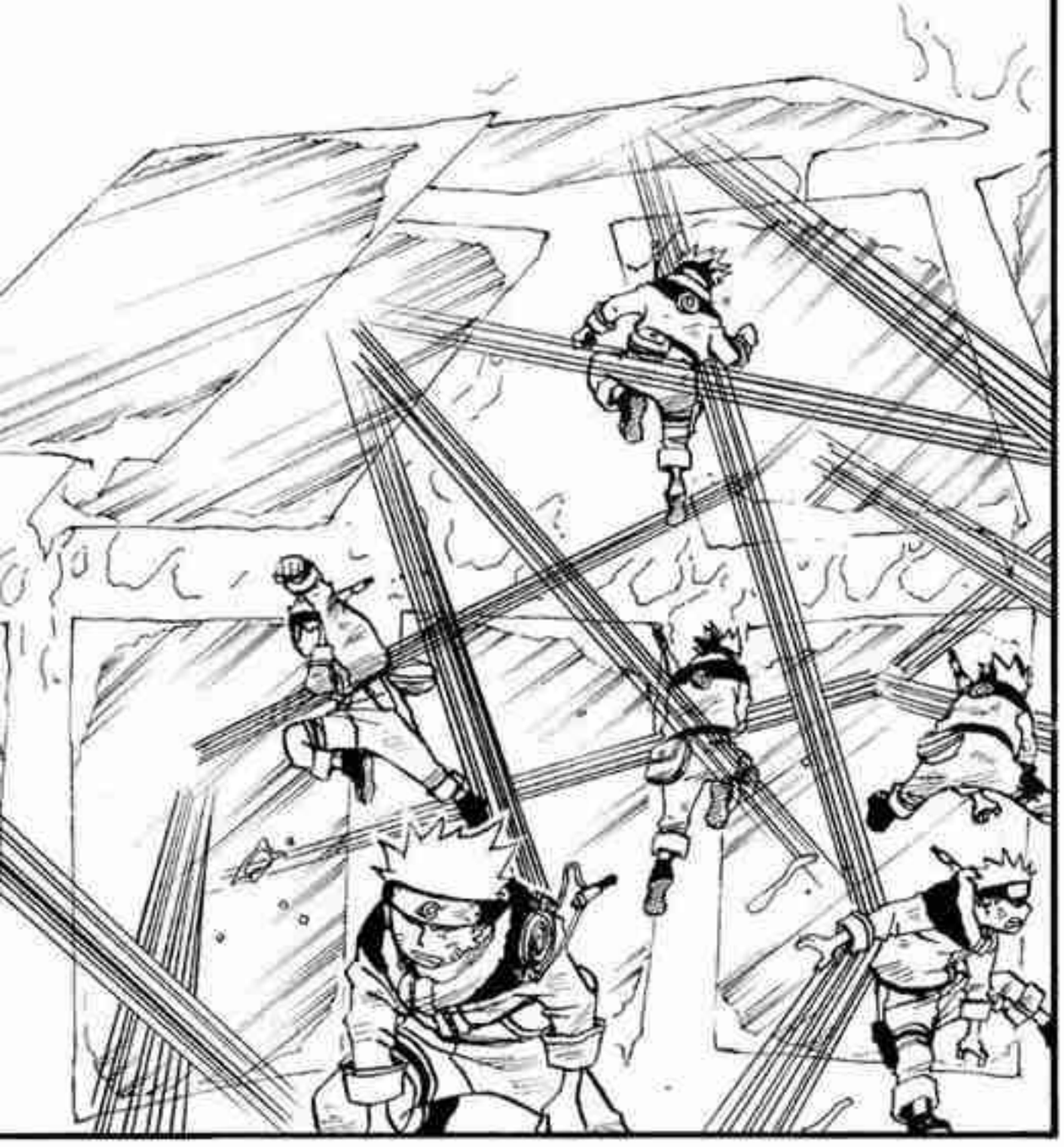
FLAR BLAZE OF GLORY!!!

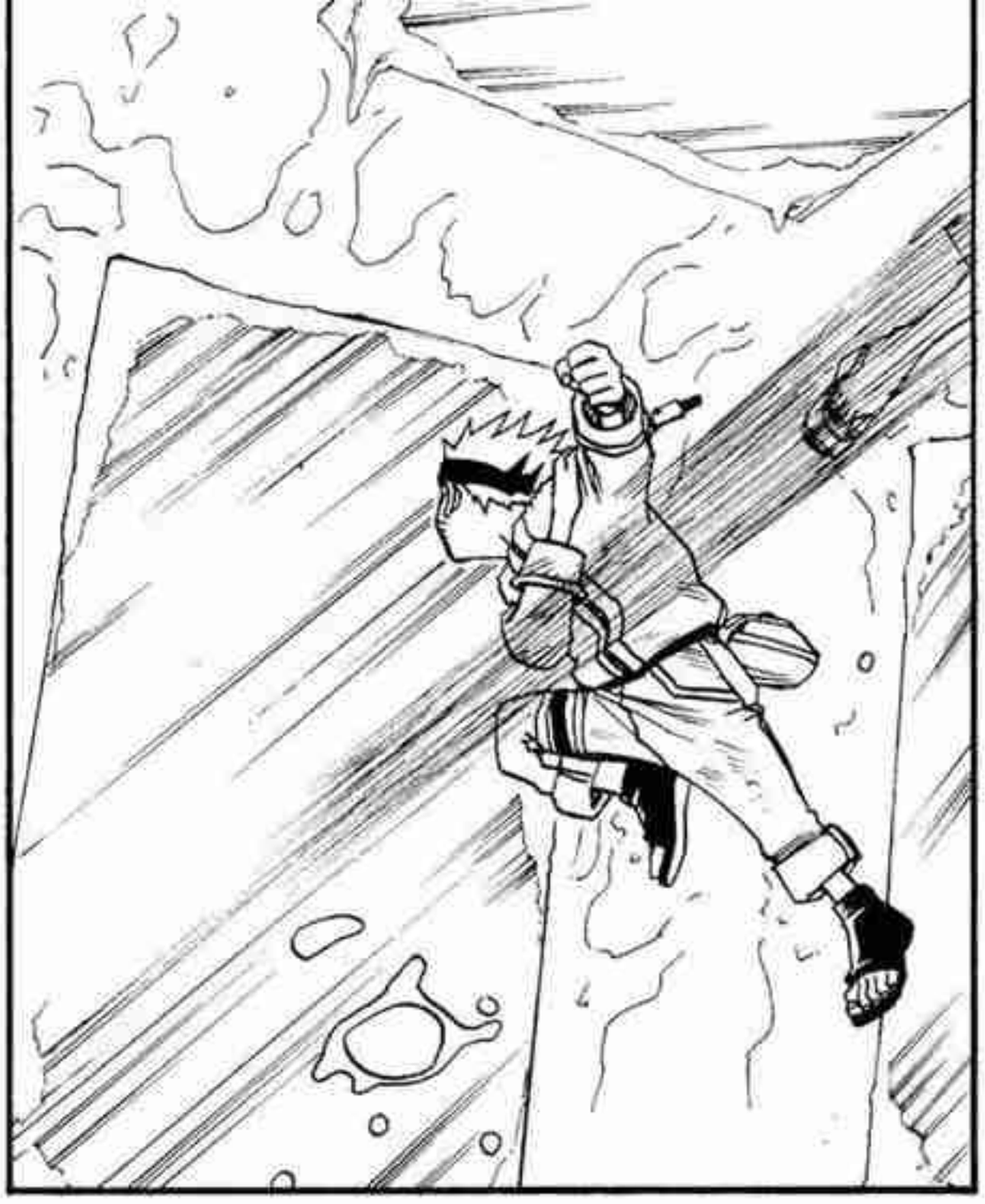


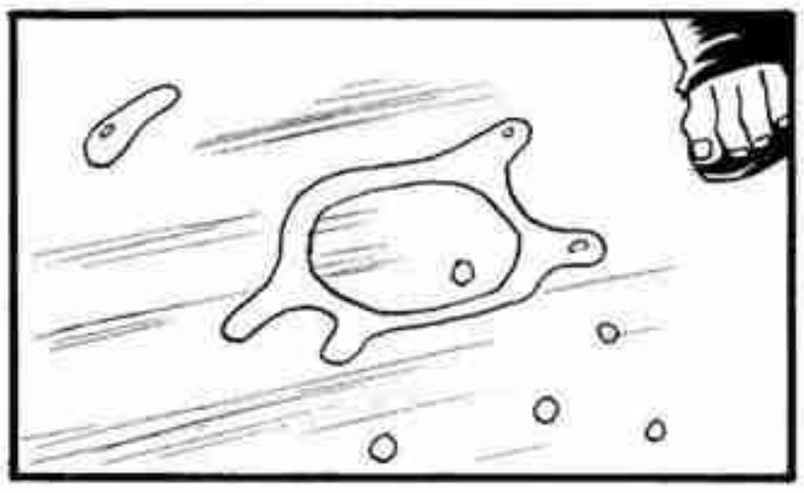
AUGH!!
CLOP
GAAH!!!
GLEAM
SHR
SHR
SHR
ART OF THE DOPPEL-GANGER!!!
HAH!
STOP!!
I CAN'T BE CAUGHT.
YOUR EYES WILL NEVER SEE THE TRUTH.
WHERE'S THE ATTACK COMING FROM? ARE THEY ALL DOPPELGANGERS?
WHICH ONE OF YOU IS REAL?!
GRR

BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM

IF I CLOBBER EVERY ONE OF HIM, THEN SOONER OR LATER I'LL GET TO THE REAL ONE!!!





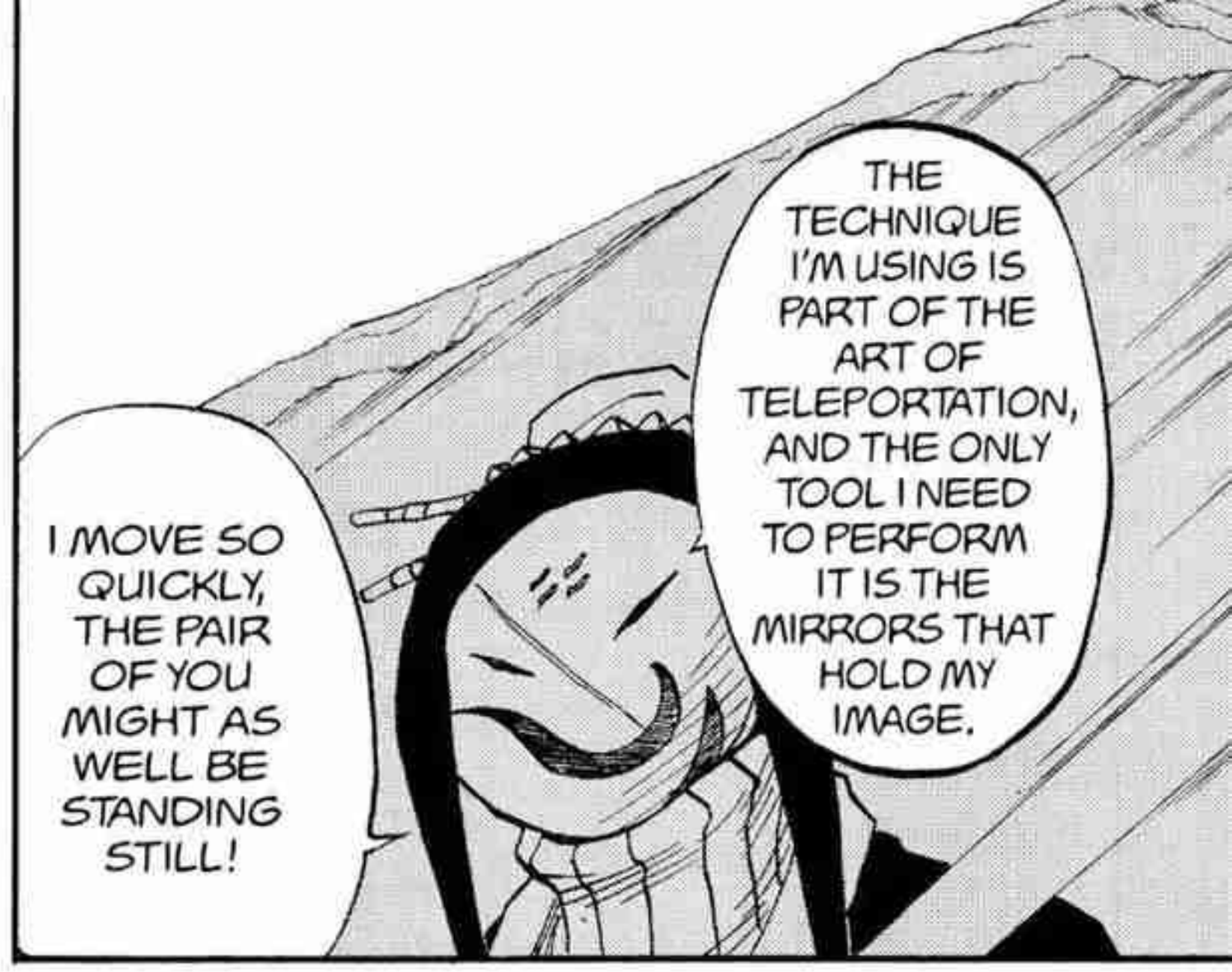


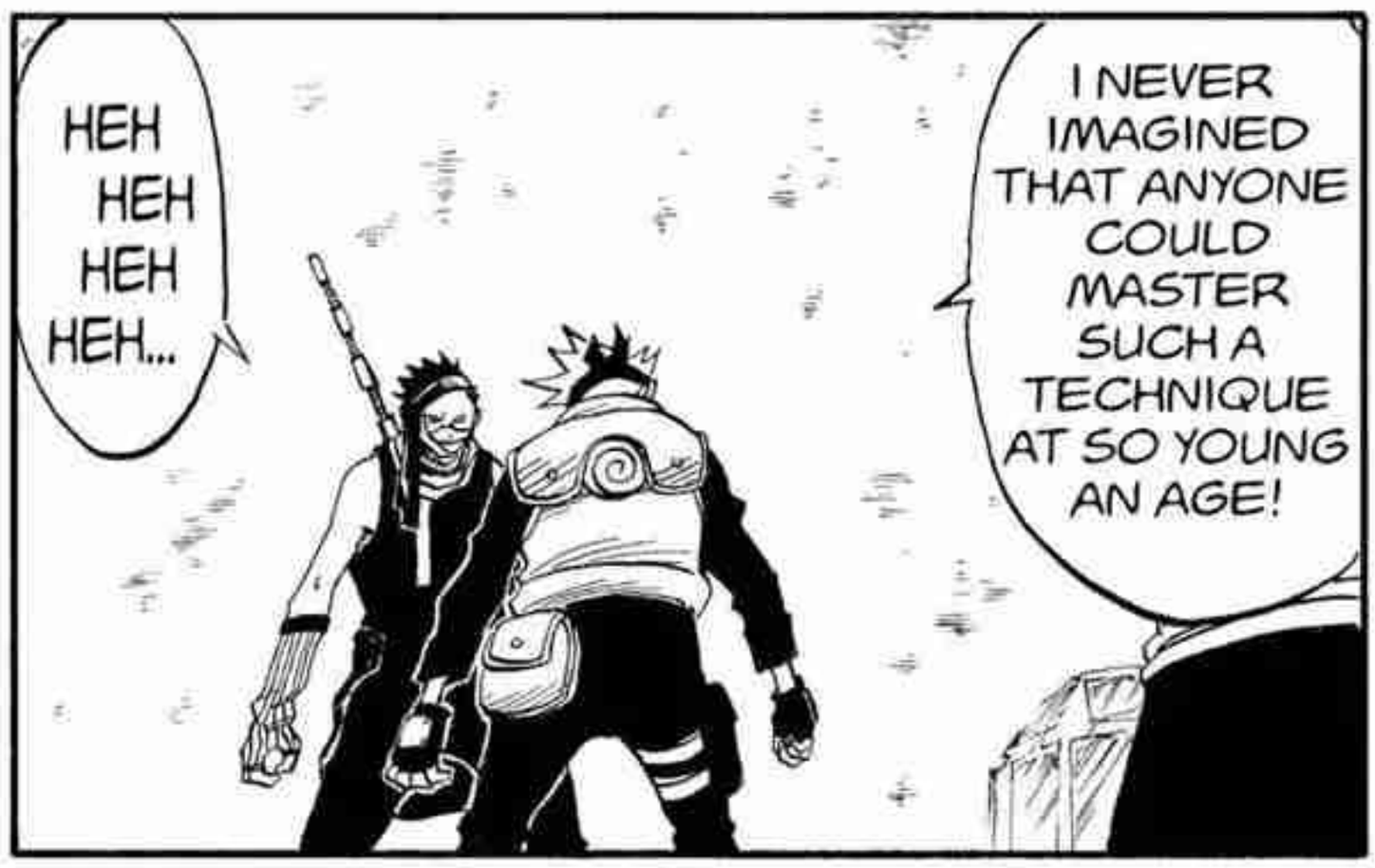
CRLAK

SHF

POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
!
AUGH!!!

SKIIIID

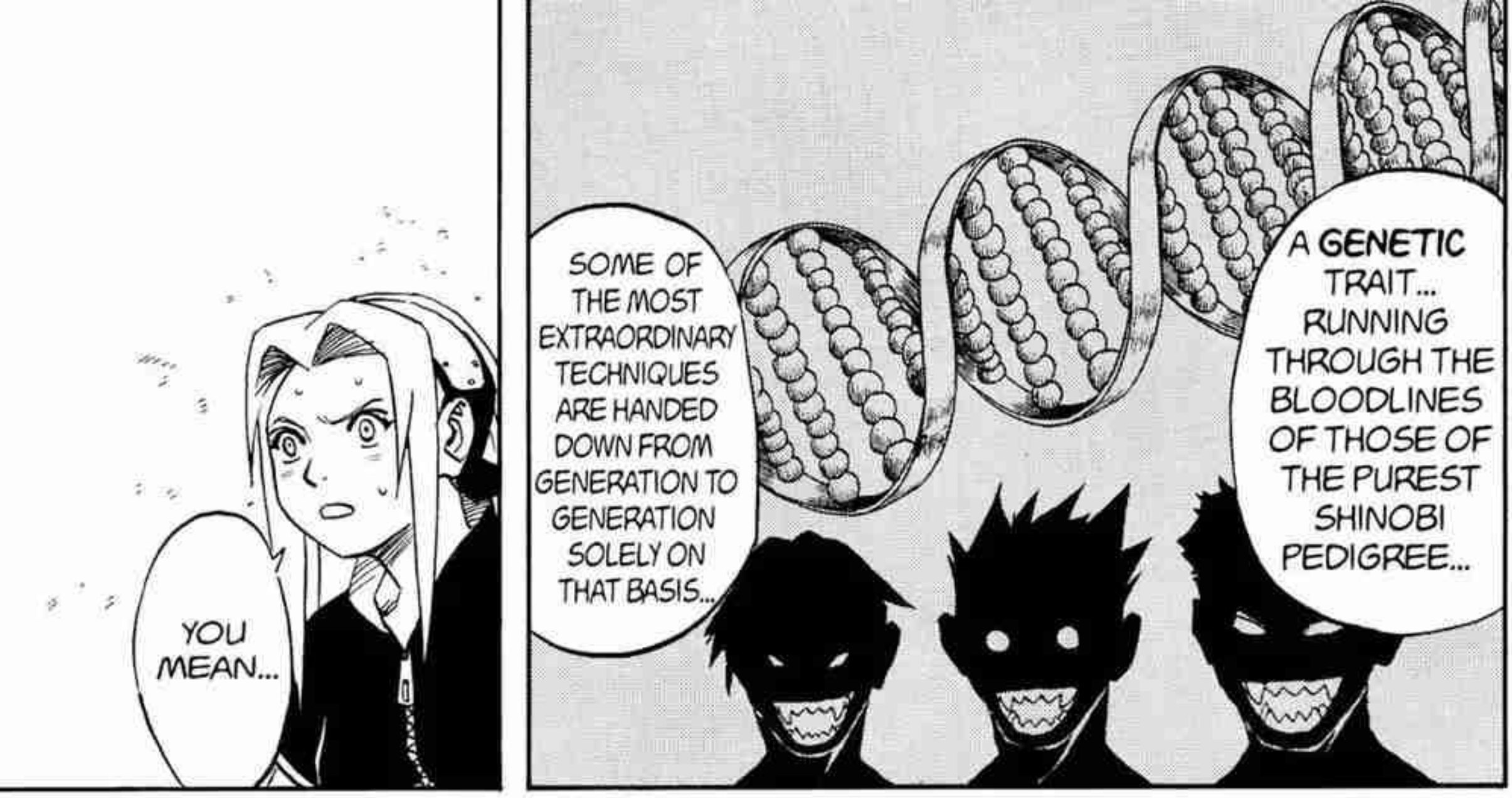

I MOVE SO QUICKLY, THE PAIR OF YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE STANDING STILL!
THE TECHNIQUE I'M USING IS PART OF THE ART OF TELEPORTATION, AND THE ONLY TOOL I NEED TO PERFORM IT IS THE MIRRORS THAT HOLD MY IMAGE.

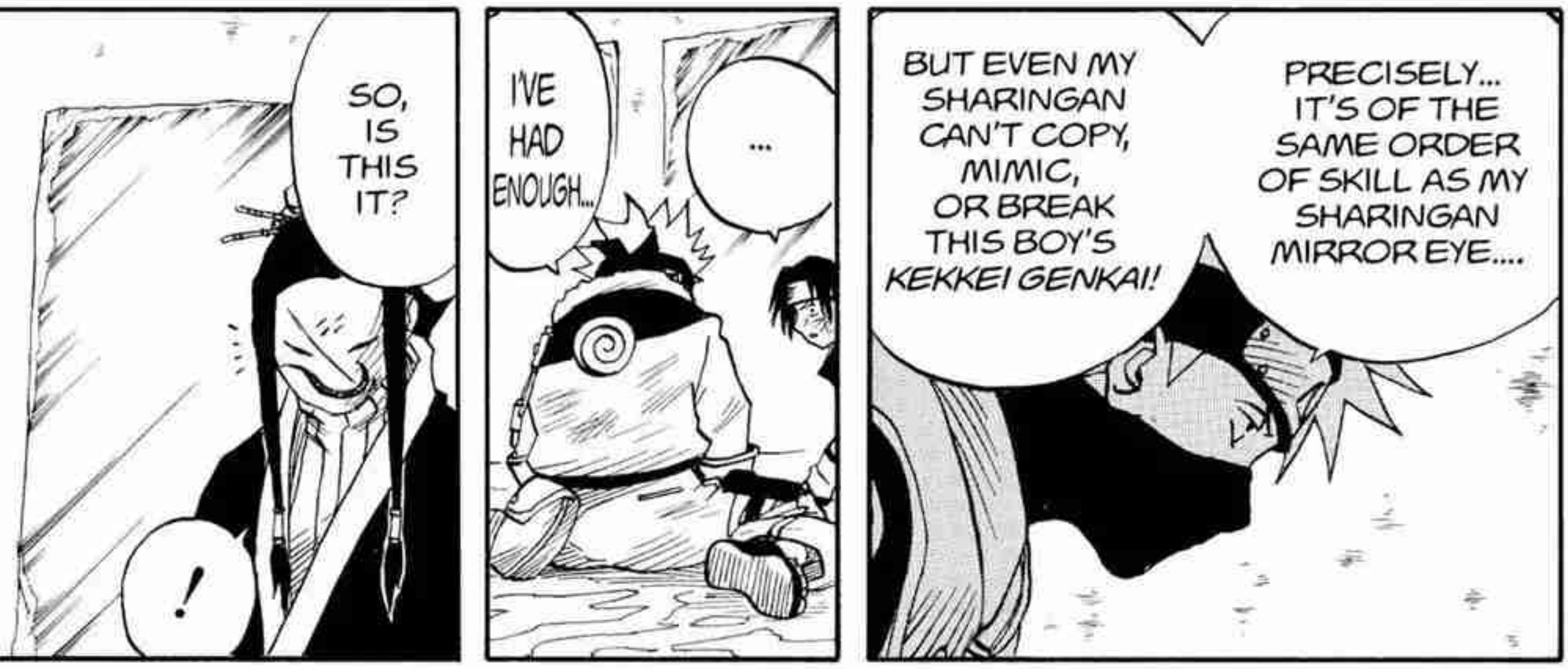

HEH HEH HEH HEH...
I NEVER IMAGINED THAT ANYONE COULD MASTER SUCH A TECHNIQUE AT SO YOUNG AN AGE!

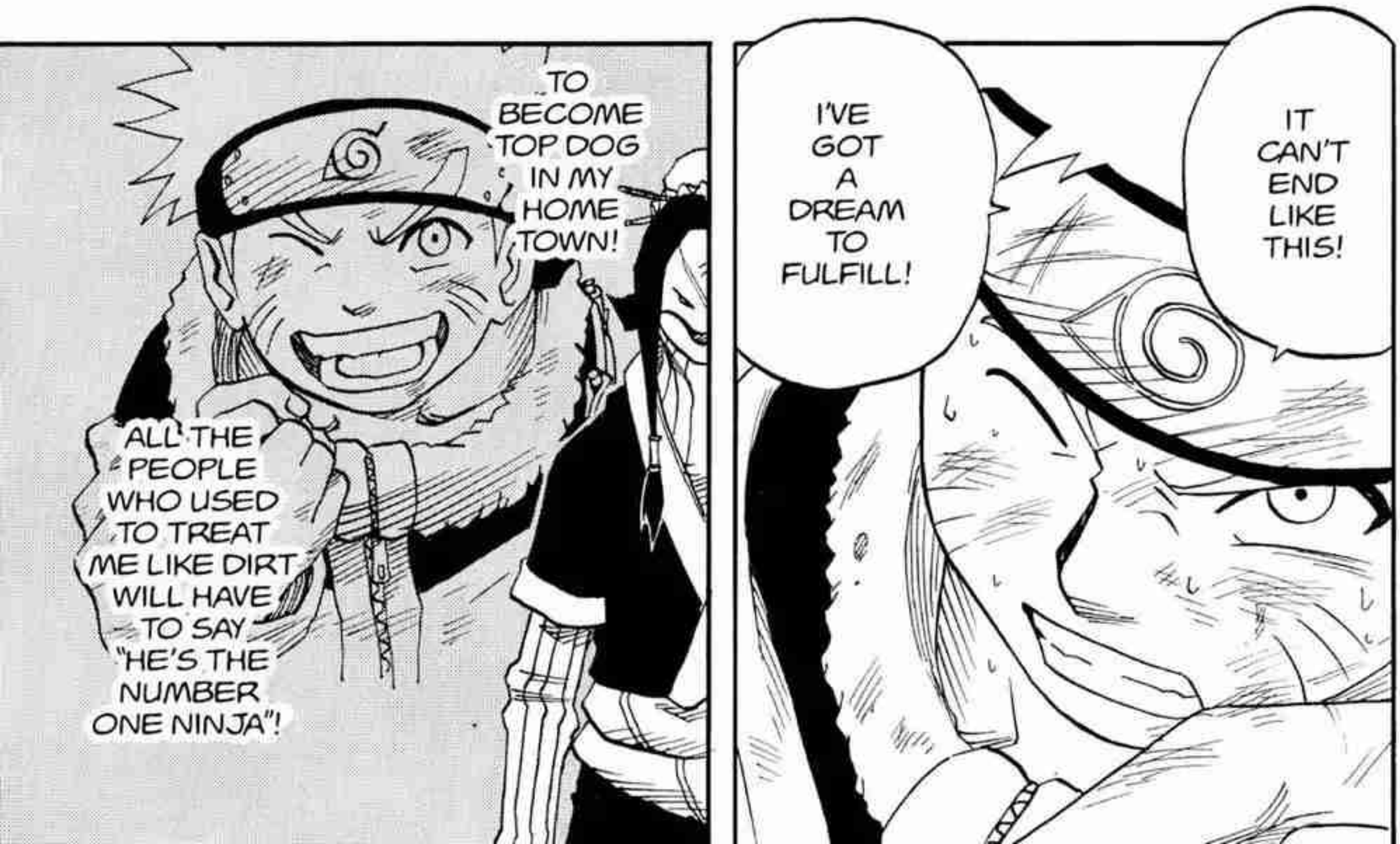
!
SO THAT'S IT!!!

IT'S A KEKKEI GENKAI— A SKILL THAT CAN BE PASSED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT!

!
"SUCH A TECH-NIQUE"...?


YOU MEAN...
SOME OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY TECHNIQUES ARE HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION SOLELY ON THAT BASIS...
A GENETIC TRAIT... RUNNING THROUGH THE BLOODLINES OF THOSE OF THE PUREST SHINOBI PEDIGREE...

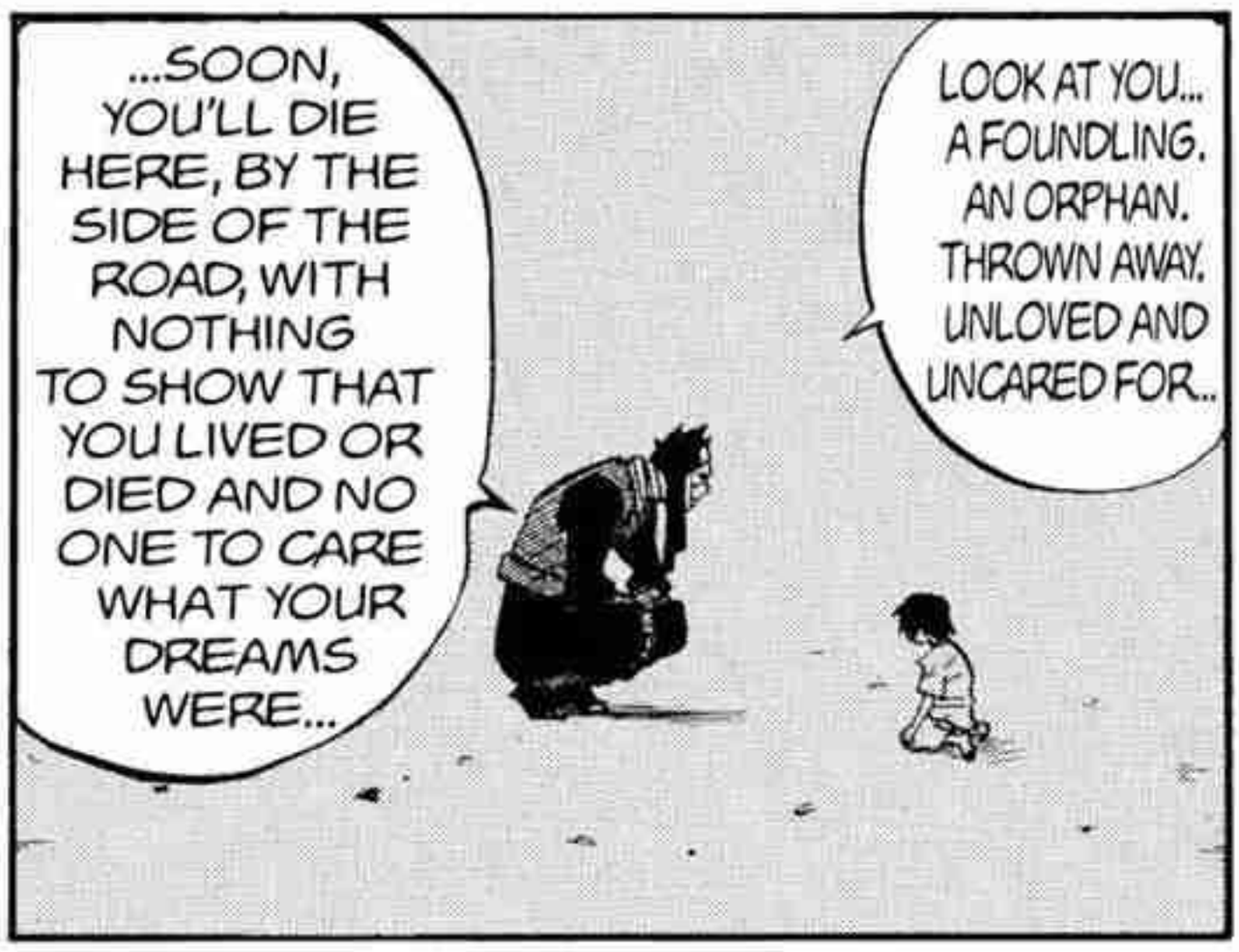

SO, IS THIS IT?
!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH...
...
BUT EVEN MY SHARINGAN CAN'T COPY, MIMIC, OR BREAK THIS BOY'S KEKKEI GENKAI!
PRECISELY... IT'S OF THE SAME ORDER OF SKILL AS MY SHARINGAN MIRROR EYE....


...TO BECOME TOP DOG IN MY HOME TOWN!
ALL THE PEOPLE WHO USED TO TREAT ME LIKE DIRT WILL HAVE TO SAY "HE'S THE NUMBER ONE NINJA"!
I'VE GOT A DREAM TO FULFILL!
IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS!

PATHETIC!

DREAMS...

!


...SOON, YOU'LL DIE HERE, BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, WITH NOTHING TO SHOW THAT YOU LIVED OR DIED AND NO ONE TO CARE WHAT YOUR DREAMS WERE...
LOOK AT YOU... A FOUNDLING. AN ORPHAN. THROWN AWAY. UNLOVED AND UNCARED FOR...

...I... CAN SEE MYSELF IN YOUR EYES. WE HAVE THE SAME EXPRESSION!

I... FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EMBRACE THE FULL SHINOBI PHILOSOPHY.

...

I SHALL KILL MY OWN HEART WITH MY BLADE– JUST AS THE WORD "SHINOBI" WAS ORIGINALLY THE WORDS "HEART" AND "BLADE"– AND ACT AS A FULL-FLEDGED SHINOBI WOULD!

HOWEVER, IF YOU TWO ARE GOING TO COME AT ME...

... NOT FORCE ME TO KILL YOU.

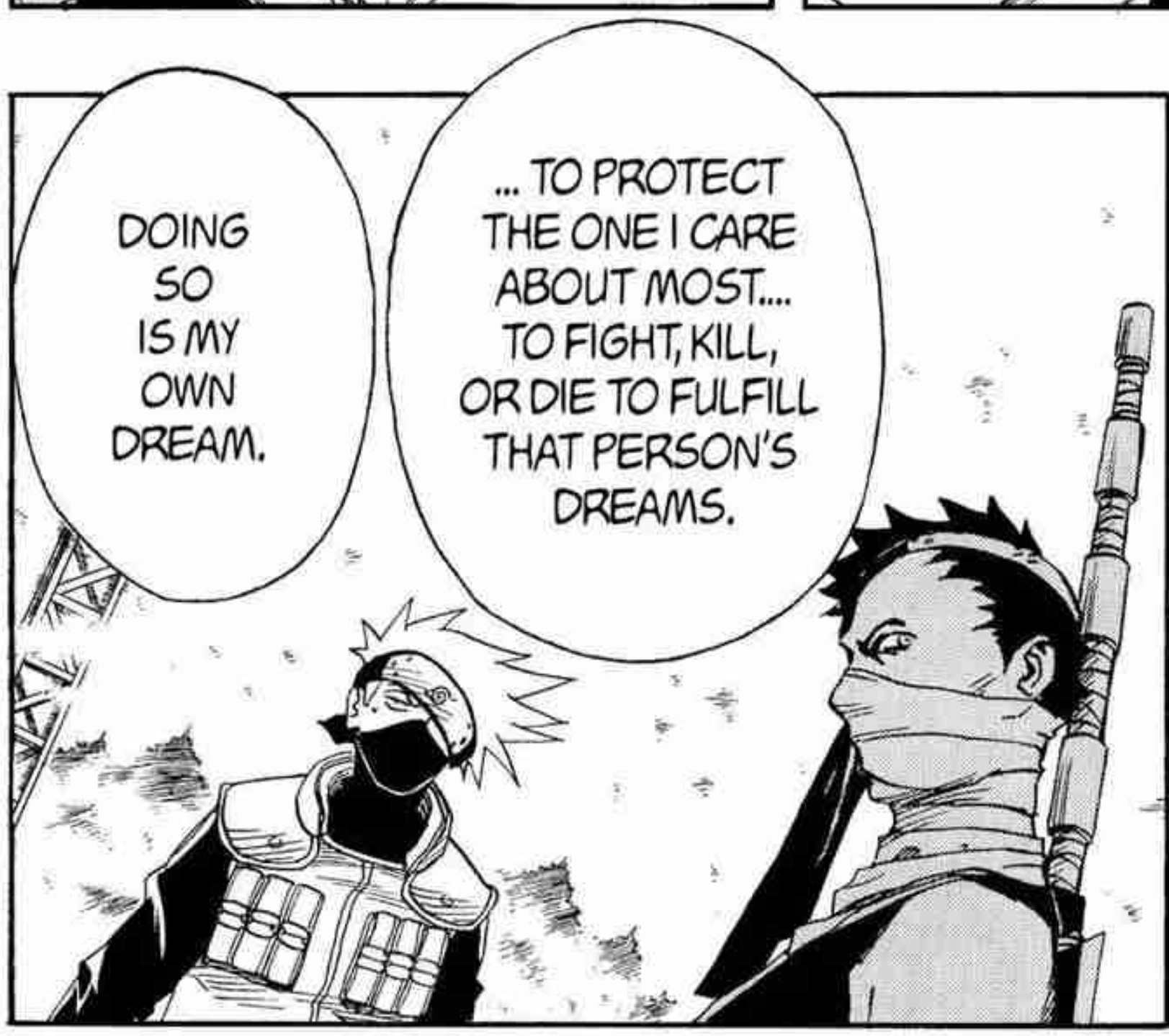
I CAN'T HELP BUT PREFER THAT THE PAIR OF YOU...

... AND ALL OF OUR DREAMS AND FUTURES BALANCE ON THE EDGE OF A KNIFE.

THIS BRIDGE IS A NEXUS OF OUR DESTINIES...

... AS YOU HAVE YOURS...

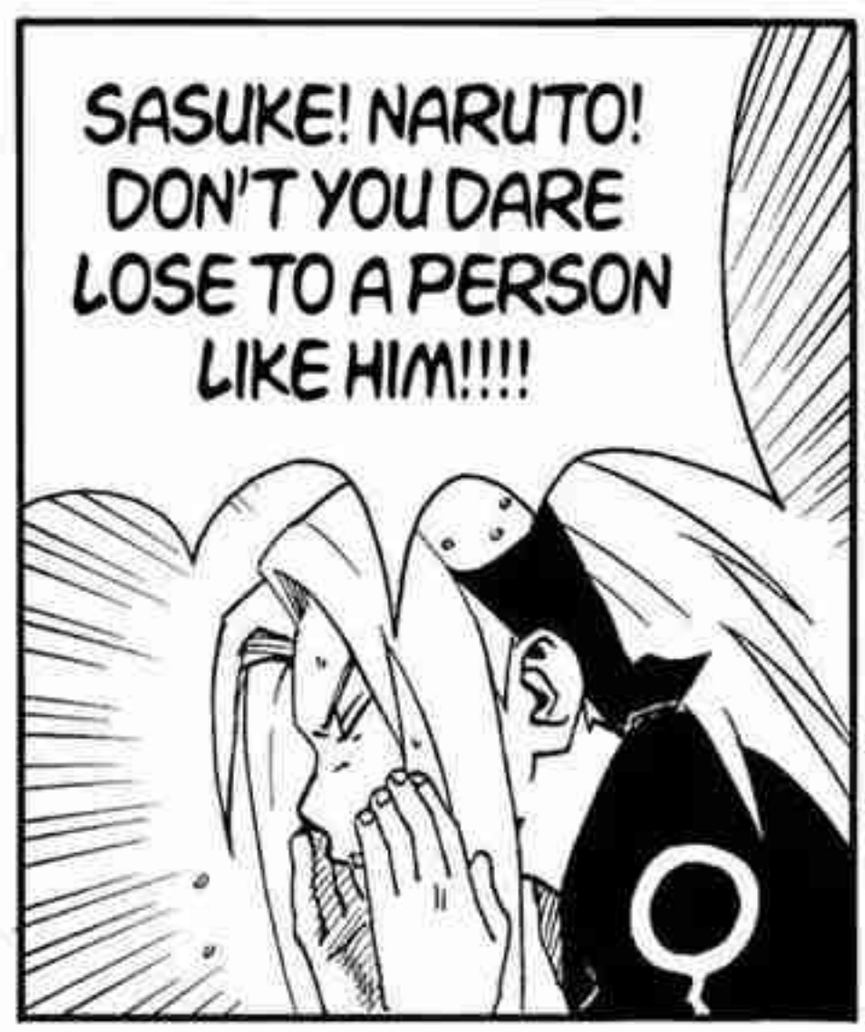
I HAVE MY OWN DREAMS....


DOING SO IS MY OWN DREAM.
... TO PROTECT THE ONE I CARE ABOUT MOST.... TO FIGHT, KILL, OR DIE TO FULFILL THAT PERSON'S DREAMS.

PLEASE TRY NOT TO RESENT ME, BUT I'M WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES...

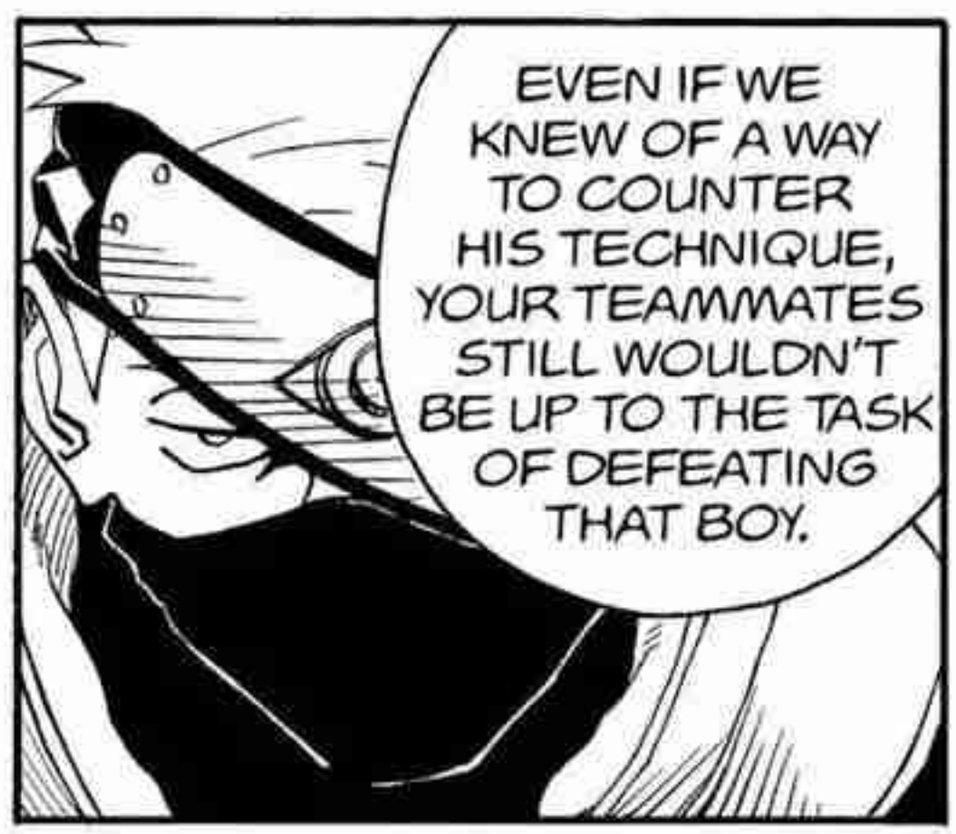
...AND I SHALL KILL YOU BOTH.
TO THAT END, I WILL BECOME A TRUE SHINOBI...

HUNH?
STOP ENCOURAGING THEM, SAKURA!!

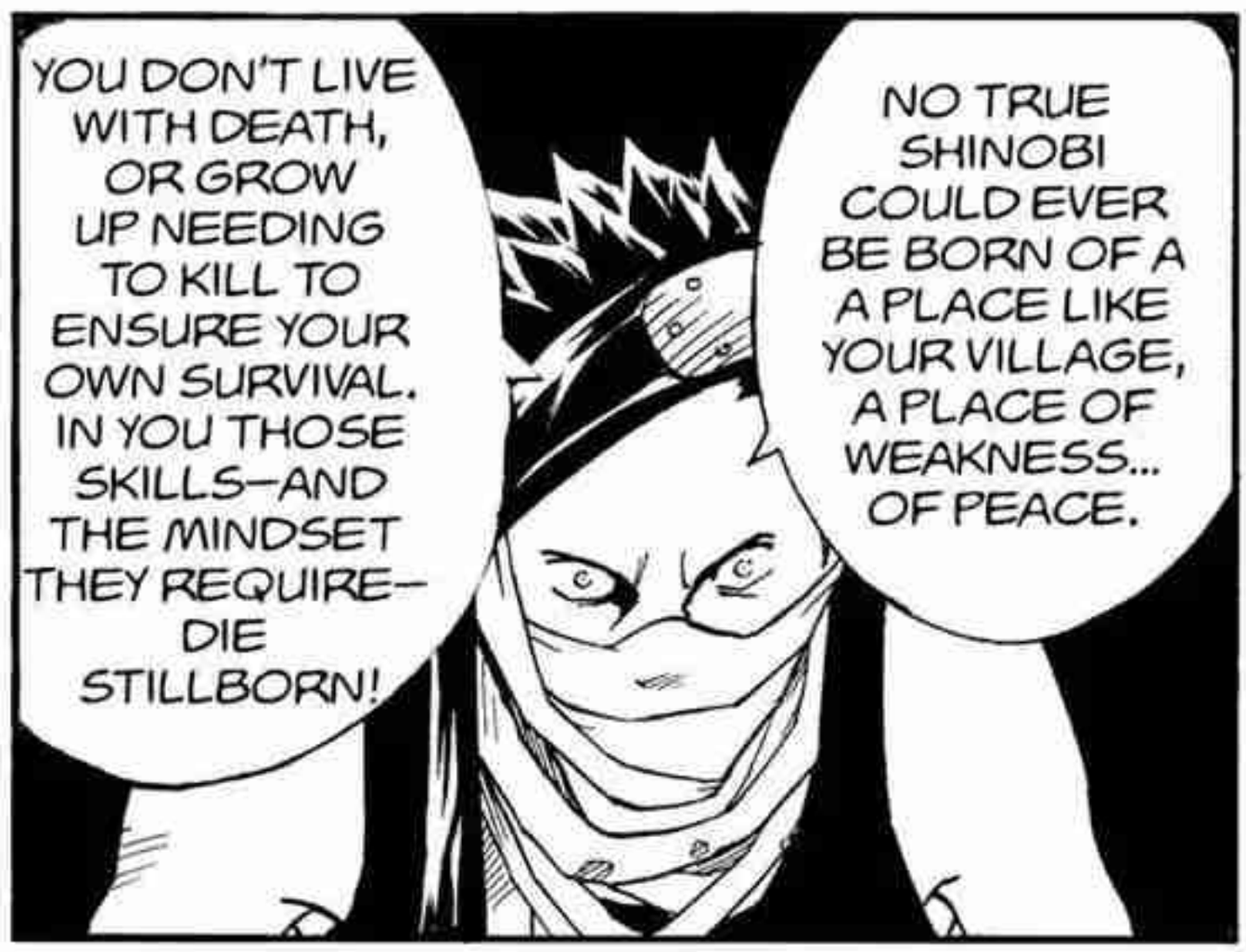

SASUKE! NARUTO! DON'T YOU DARE LOSE TO A PERSON LIKE HIM!!!!

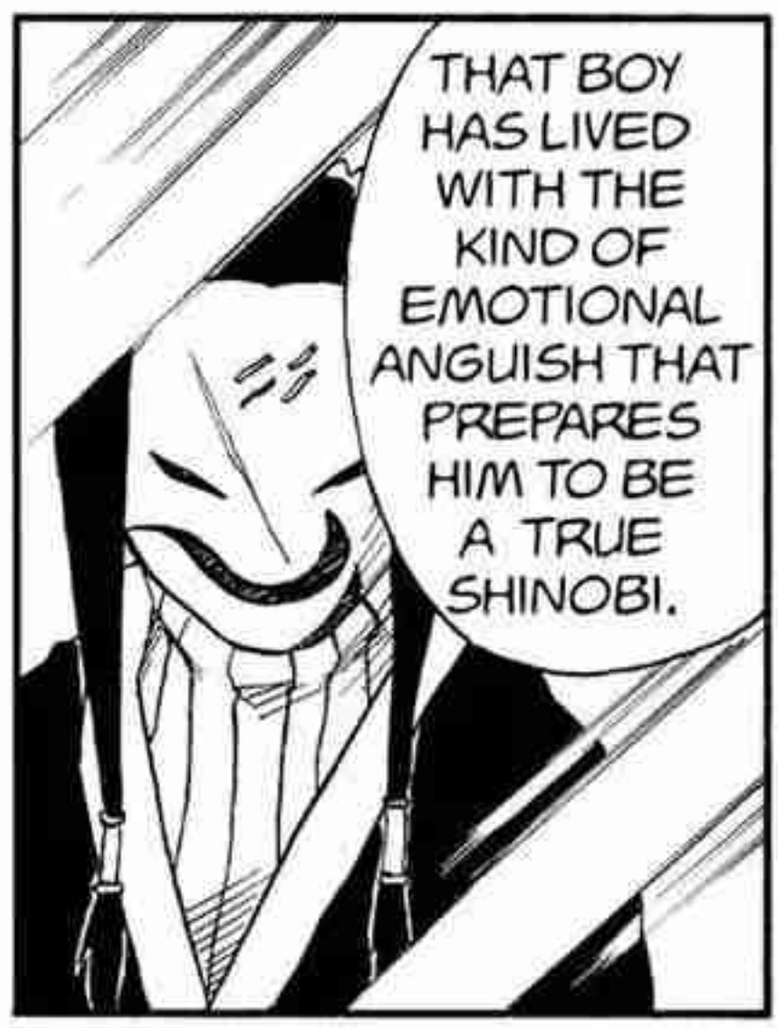
HEH HEH HEH...
HEH HEH...

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
!


EVEN IF WE KNEW OF A WAY TO COUNTER HIS TECHNIQUE, YOUR TEAMMATES STILL WOULDN'T BE UP TO THE TASK OF DEFEATING THAT BOY.

TO TURN THEIR HEARTS TO ICE AND TAKE A HUMAN LIFE.
THOSE TWO HAVEN'T YET DEVELOPED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTH...


YOU DON'T LIVE WITH DEATH, OR GROW UP NEEDING TO KILL TO ENSURE YOUR OWN SURVIVAL. IN YOU THOSE SKILLS—AND THE MINDSET THEY REQUIRE—DIE STILLBORN!
NO TRUE SHINOBI COULD EVER BE BORN OF A A PLACE LIKE YOUR VILLAGE, A PLACE OF WEAKNESS... OF PEACE.


THAT BOY HAS LIVED WITH THE KIND OF EMOTIONAL ANGUISH THAT PREPARES HIM TO BE A TRUE SHINOBI.

GRR

...

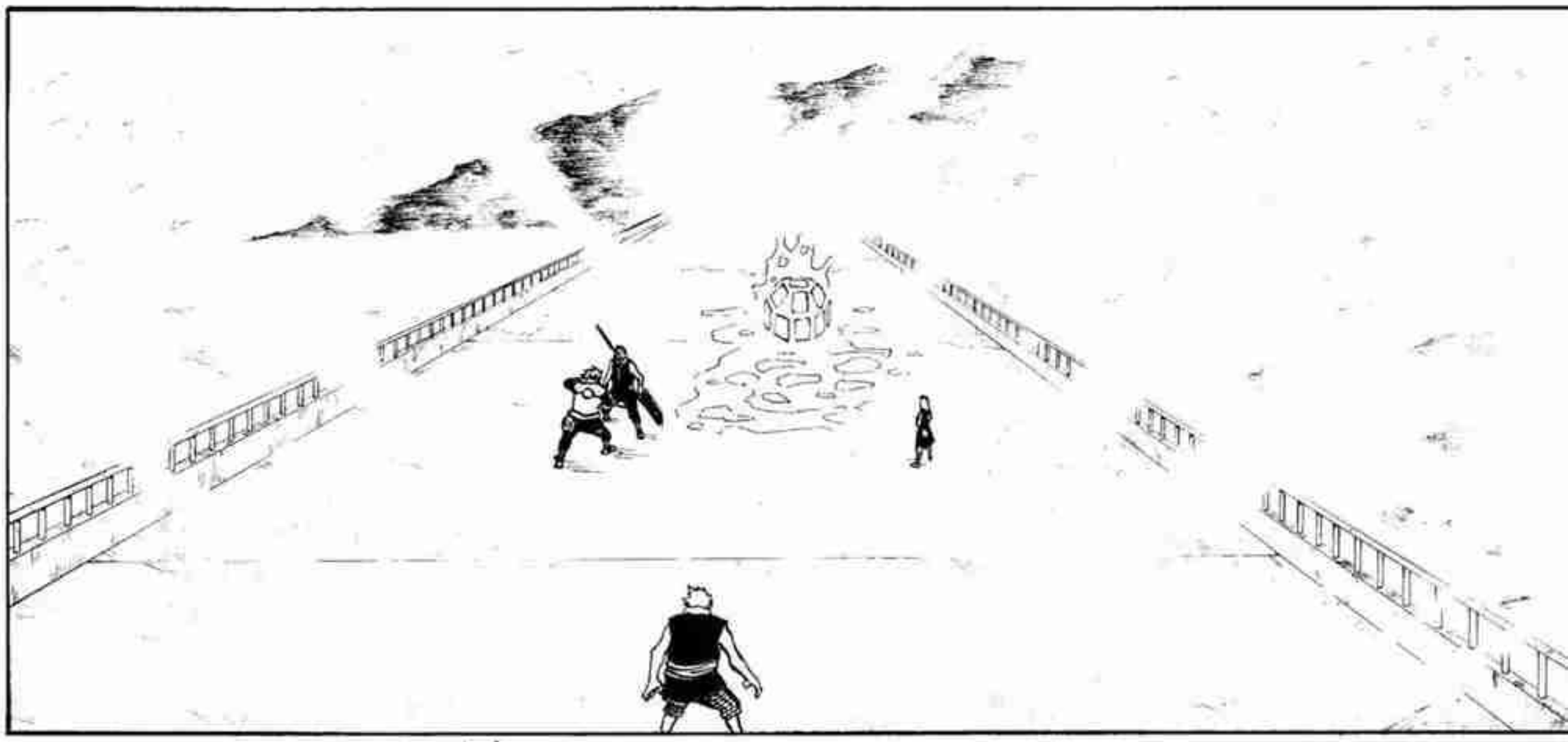
MASTER KAKASHI... WHAT CAN WE DO?

...IF I PUT AN END TO THIS...!
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME...

WHAT A VULGAR MANEUVER. SO OBVIOUS, SO LACKING IN FINESSE!
HEH HEH... GOING TO USE THE SHARINGAN...?

Number 26:
Sharingan Devastation!!

SHA



!

TAK

THE SHARINGAN EYE!!!

SHING
CHUKK
PLIT
PLIT
PLIT

YOU CAN SNEER ALL YOU WANT ABOUT MY "LACK OF FINESSE," ZABUZA... IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF THE SHARINGAN. AND OF ME.

... I'VE BEATEN HIS FIGHTING SKILLS INTO HIM!
SINCE HE WAS A TODDLER...
THAT MASKED BOY IS SO POWERFUL, EVEN MASTER KAKASHI CAN'T WIN...?!
MASTER...!
AND HE BEARS WITHIN HIM THE FORMIDABLE LEGACY OF AN INHERITED KEKKEI GENKAI!
HIS SKILLS SURPASS EVEN MY OWN.
HE'S LOST ALL REGARD FOR HIS OWN LIFE AND BECOME A KILLING MACHINE... A TRUE SHINOBI.
EVEN IN THE FACE OF UNTHINK-ABLE ADVERSITY, HE HAS ALWAYS PREVAILED!
SHLUPA
... ENTIRELY UNLIKE THE SCRAPS OF TRASH THAT FOLLOW AT YOUR HEELS.
THUS, I HAVE FORGED AND CARRY WITH ME A WEAPON OF MATCHLESS QUALITY AND SKILL...

IS THERE ANYTHING DULLER THAN LISTENING TO SOMEONE ELSE BRAG?
IT'S SHOW TIME!

?!

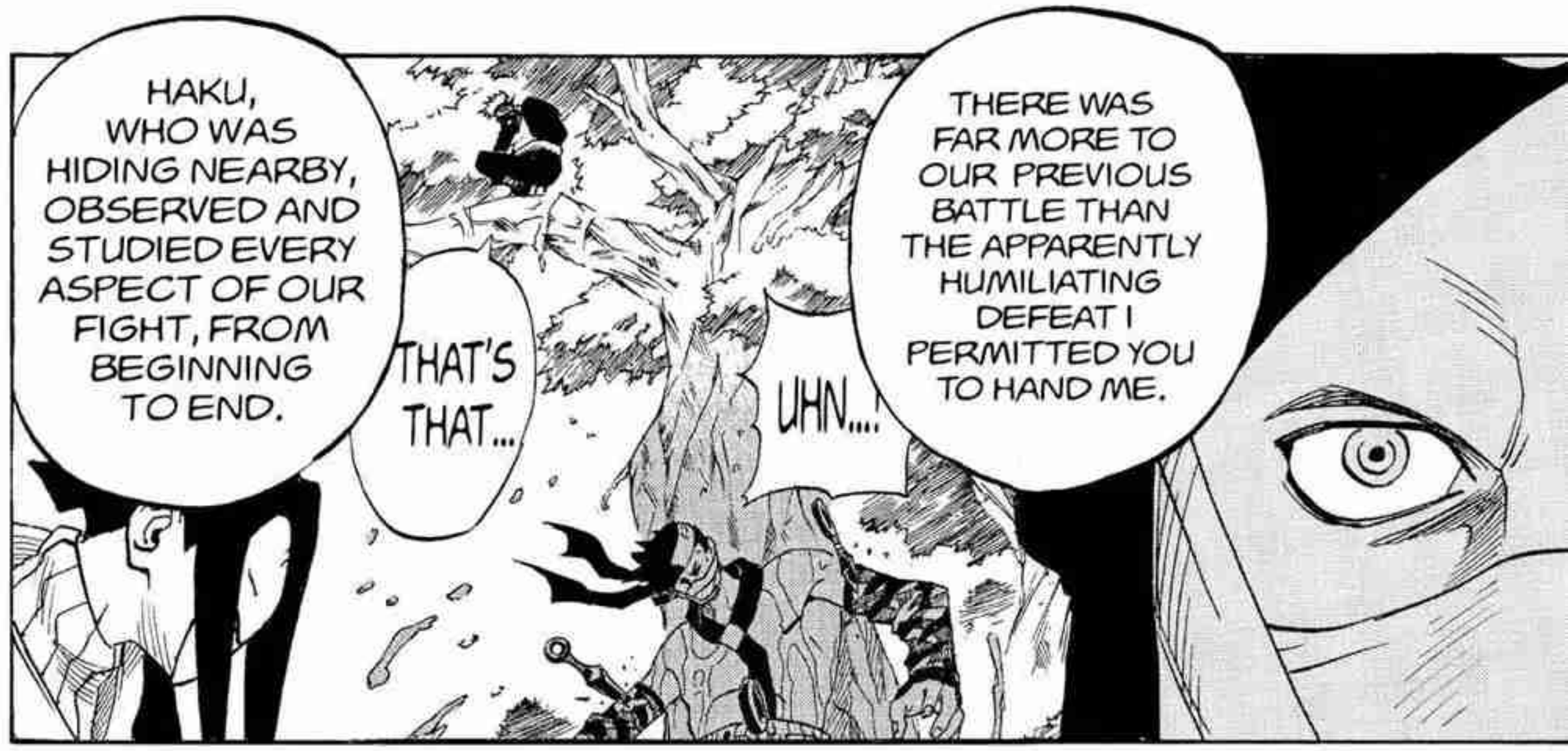
YOU TURNED A VERY PRETTY PHRASE AT OUR LAST ENCOUNTER...
PERHAPS YOU MIGHT HOLD OFF A MOMENT, NOW THAT I'VE CAUGHT MY BREATH. AND—TO BORROW YOUR OWN IDIOM—PERMIT ME ONE MORE BOAST.

?

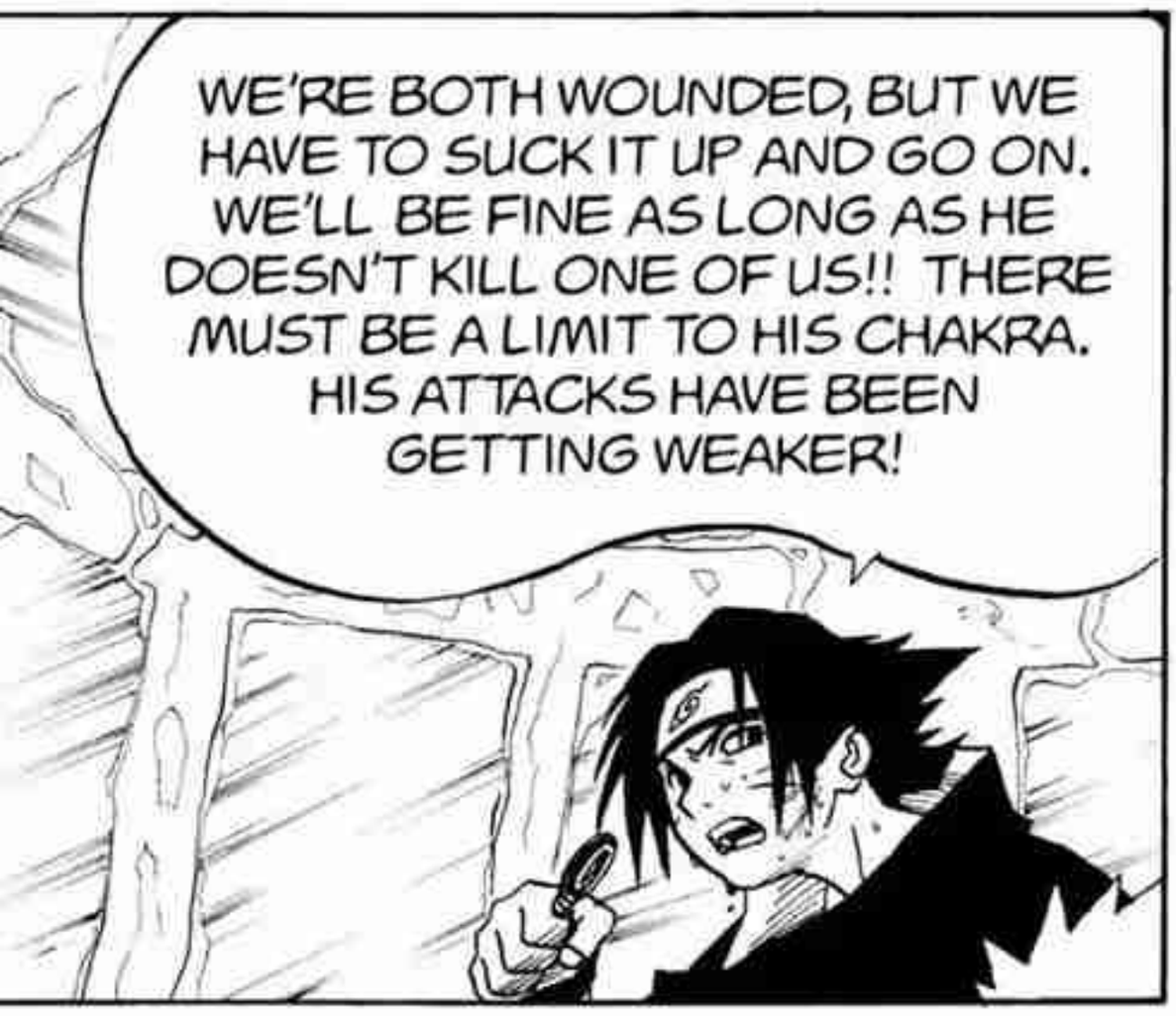
...
FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN DYING TO STEAL IT.

!

..."THE SAME SPELL WON'T WORK ON ME TWICE."
SOME-THING TO THE EFFECT OF, "JUST SO YOU KNOW"...
HEH...



* "The Art of Hiding in the Mist"


WE'RE BOTH WOUNDED, BUT WE HAVE TO SUCK IT UP AND GO ON. WE'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T KILL ONE OF US!! THERE MUST BE A LIMIT TO HIS CHAKRA. HIS ATTACKS HAVE BEEN GETTING WEAKER!

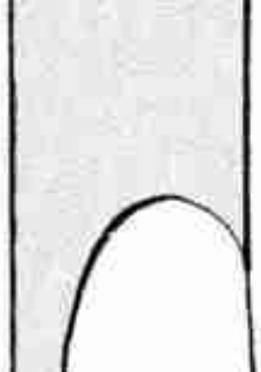
SHUT UP AND GET ON YOUR FEET! I CAN'T FIGHT HIM AND WATCH OUT FOR YOU, TOO!
SASUKE! WE'VE GOTTA STOP REACTING AND TAKE BACK THE INITIATIVE!!
AW, MAN...

SHU

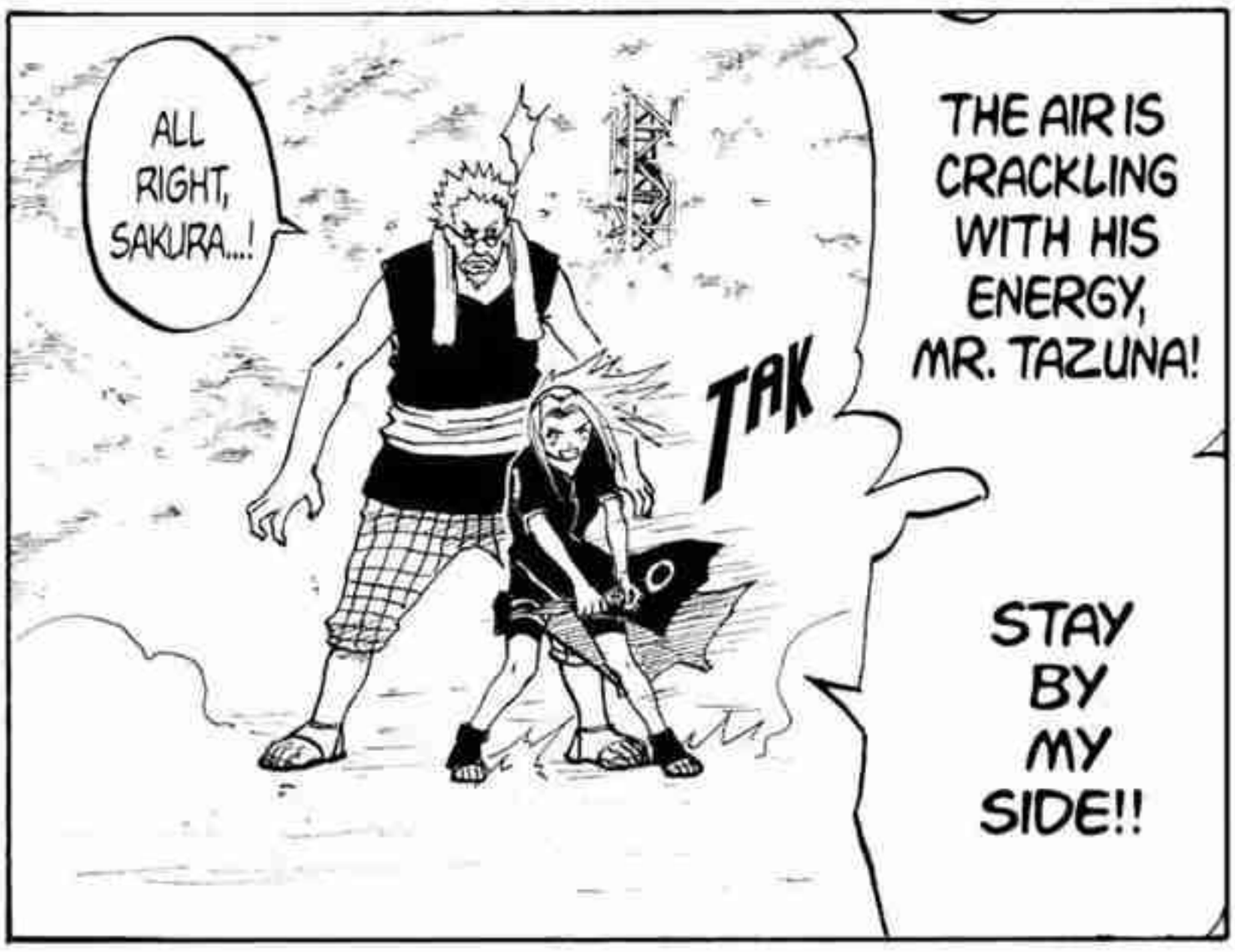
HE'S COMING!!!
CHING

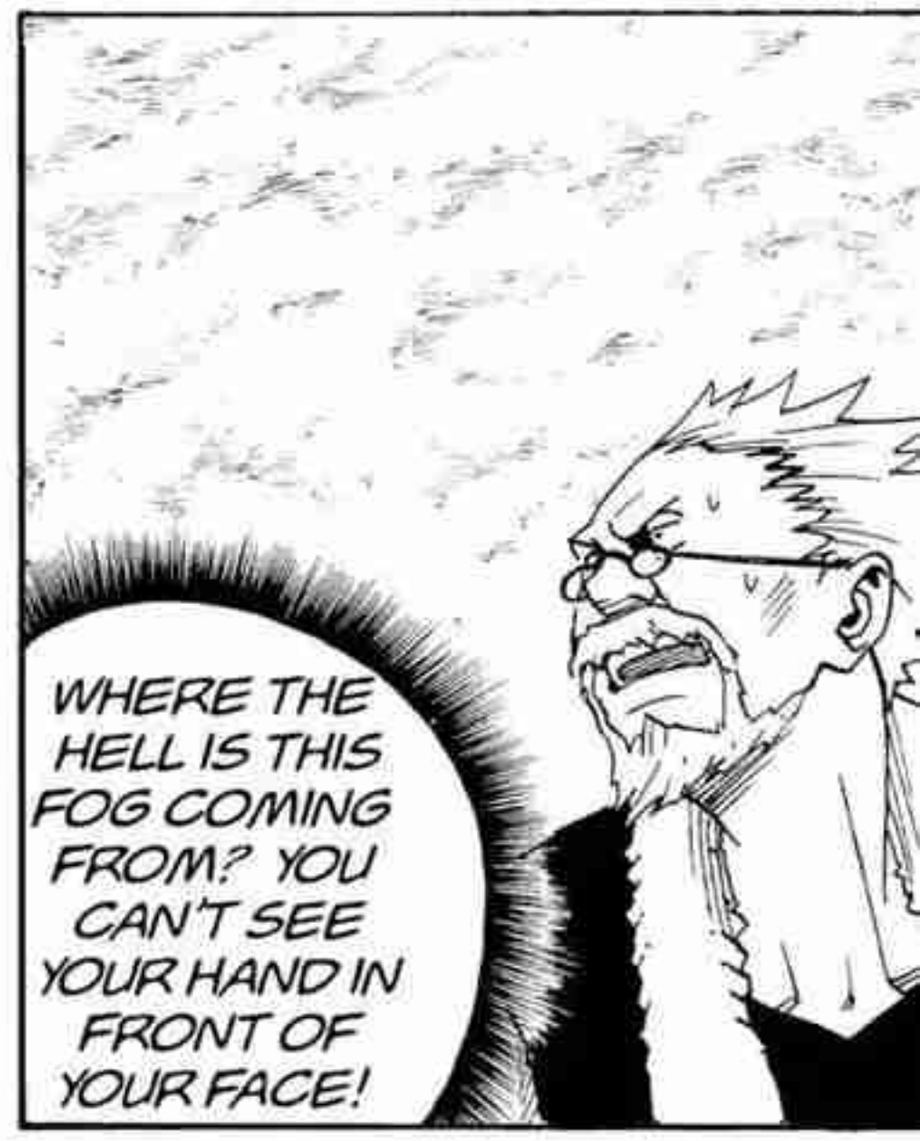
FWUF

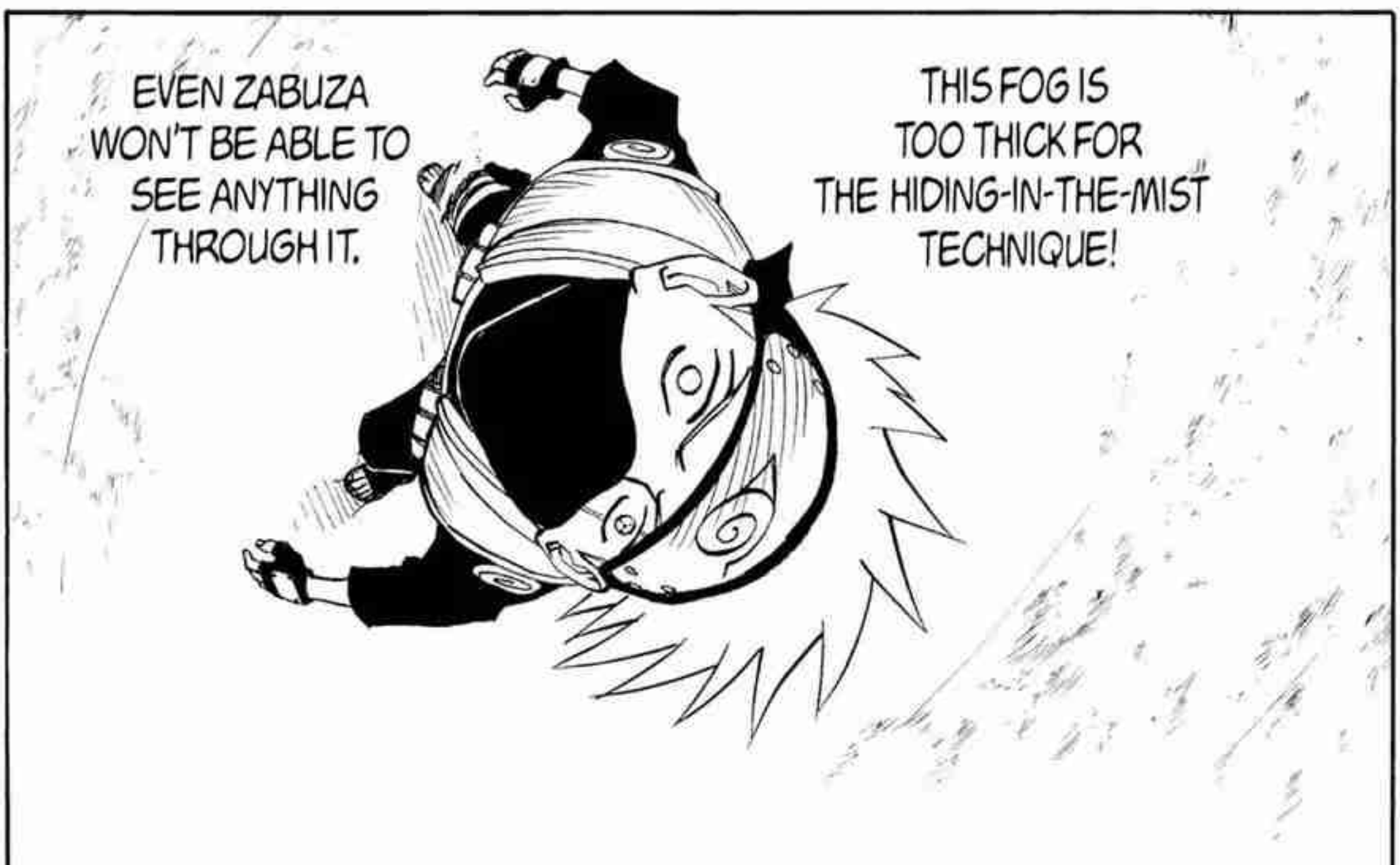
...AND CONCENTRATE ON WHAT I HAVE TO DO.
...HE'S RIGHT... I'VE GOT TO HAVE FAITH IN SASUKE...


...

!
SAKURA! I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO PROTECT MR. TAZUNA!!!


ALL RIGHT, SAKURA...!
TAK
THE AIR IS CRACKLING WITH HIS ENERGY, MR. TAZUNA!
STAY BY MY SIDE!!


WHERE THE HELL IS THIS FOG COMING FROM? YOU CAN'T SEE YOUR HAND IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE!


EVEN ZABUZA WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE ANYTHING THROUGH IT.
THIS FOG IS TOO THICK FOR THE HIDING-IN-THE-MIST TECHNIQUE!

!
CHING
GASP!
CHING
CHING
CHING
CHING
CHING
CHING
!
SHH
YOU REPELLED THOSE NICELY... NO LESS THAN I'D EXPECT OF KAKASHI OF THE SHARINGAN EYE.

HIS EYES ARE CLOSED!!

HOWEVER... THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE ME... IT WILL STILL BE THE END.

SHH
HEH HEH HEH...

WHAT...?

YOU'VE OVERESTIMATED THE VALUE OF YOUR SHARINGAN.
SHM

BUT YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE PROPHET AFTER ALL, KAKASHI...
I FORESEE... YOUR DEATH.

...CAN YOU SEE THE FUTURE?
YOU PRETEND IT ENABLES YOU TO PENETRATE ALL... YET...

IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR PRECIOUS SHARINGAN IS JUST AN ELABORATE HOAX, A CONFIDENCE TRICK YOU PLAY IN ORDER TO PSYCH OUT YOUR OPPONENTS.
YOU CAN NEITHER READ MY MIND NOR THE FUTURE.

PRANCING AROUND ACTING LIKE YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE!

USING THOSE SKILLS IN CONCERT, YOU ARE ABLE TO CREATE YOUR ILLUSIONS THROUGH A COMBINATION OF MIMICRY— FROM MOVEMENT, TO THOUGHTS, TO THE SKILLS OF THOSE YOU FIGHT!
MORE PRECISELY, IT COMBINES CLARITY OF PERCEPTION AND INSIGHT ON YOUR OWN PART WITH THE ABILITY TO ALL BUT HYPNOTIZE THOSE AROUND YOU!

!!!

FWUP

COPYING FORM...

YOU ANALYZE MY SUPERFICIAL MOVEMENTS, COPY THEM, AND USE THE RAPIDITY OF THE TURNAROUND TO INDUCE FEAR AND INSECURITY.

ONCE YOU'RE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON IN MY HEART AND MIND, YOU CALCULATE JUST WHAT TO SAY TO BEND MY MIND TO YOUR WILL, AND THEN...

I'M THE GENUINE ARTICLE. NO MERE COPYCAT STANDS A CHANCE AGAINST ME.

FEH... YOU'RE A PALE IMITATION.

COPYING THOUGHT...

... AND THEN ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS MIMIC IT!

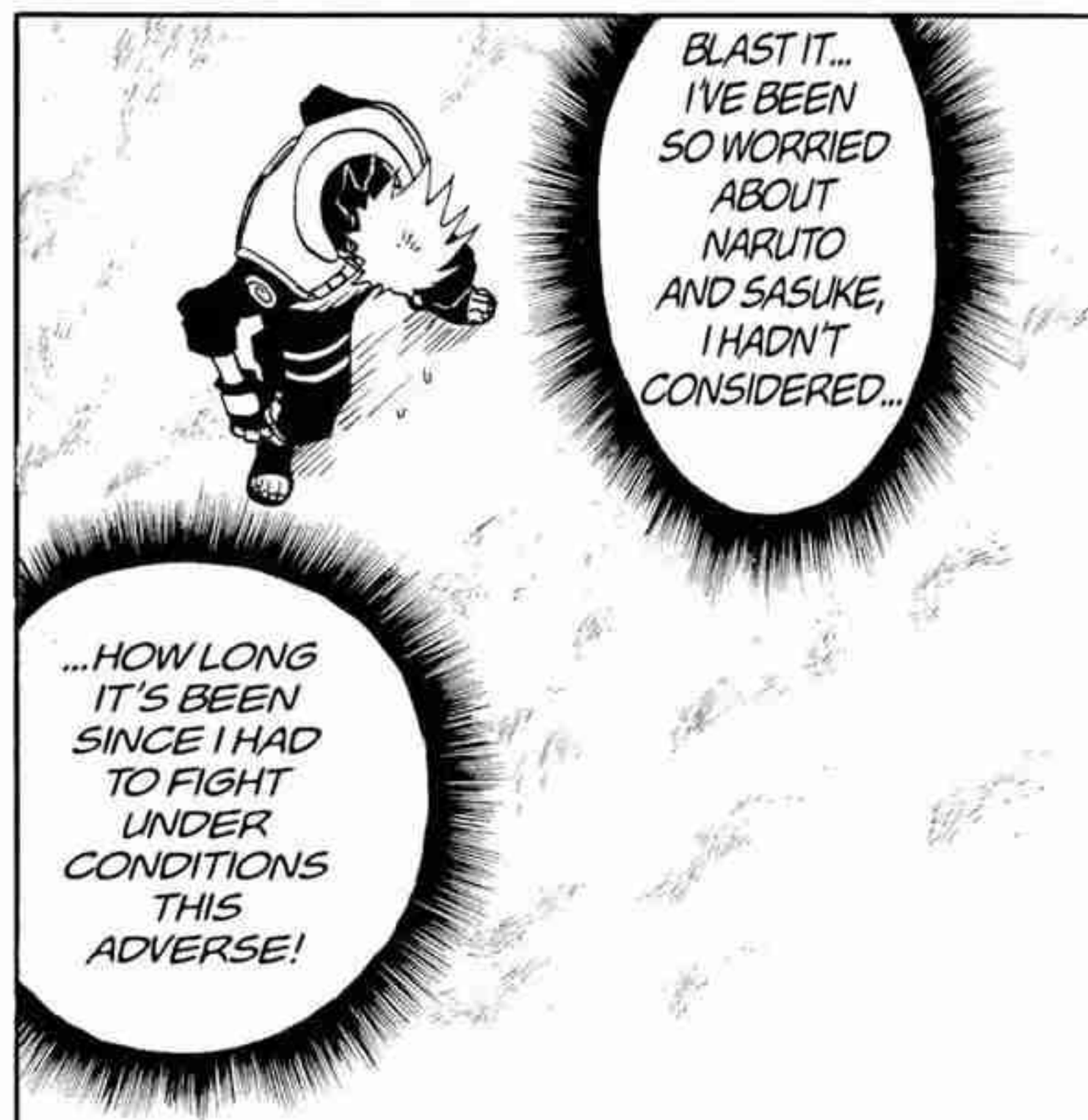
YOU CALCULATE WHEN MY INSECURITIES HAVE REACHED A FEVER PITCH, AND THEN YOU LAY YOUR TRAP.

YOU USE VISUAL HYPNOSIS TO TRICK ME INTO SIGNALLING WHAT TECHNIQUE I'LL USE AND HOW I'LL BE USING IT.

COPYING NINJUTSU...

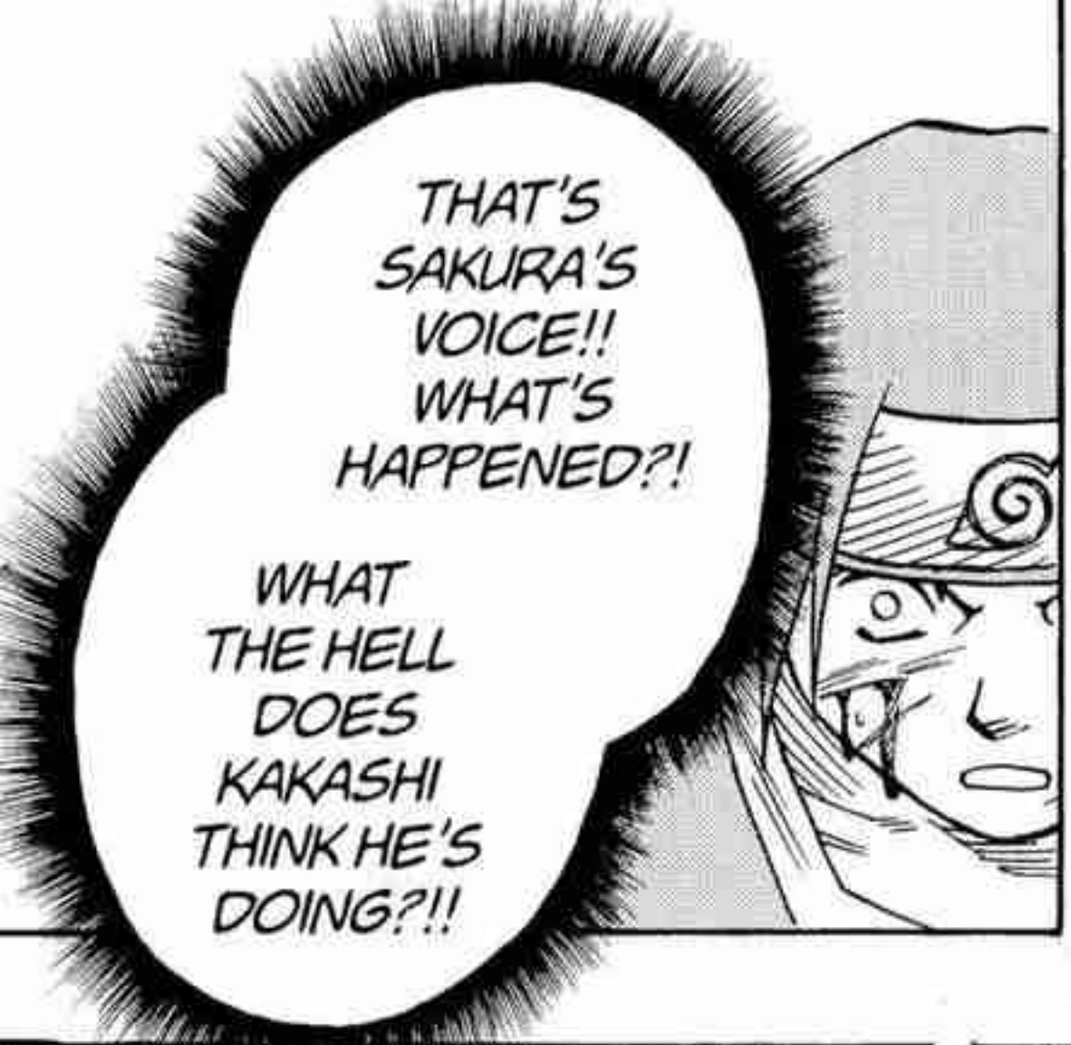
UHN!
AAGH...! IT'S HARD TO BLOCK WHAT I CAN'T SEE!!!
FIRST, I CONCEAL MYSELF WITHIN THIS THICK MIST AND NEUTRALIZE YOUR VISUAL ACUITY.
!
KNOWING THAT, IT WAS SIMPLE TO CHOOSE A COUNTER-MEASURE.
SHIN SHIN
AH--!
HEH HEH... WITH MY OWN EYES CLOSED, I ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY OF YOUR HYPNOTIZING ME WHILE WE'RE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.
SKF SKF SKF
WHAT?!
AH, BUT YOU FORGET...
... WHILE I CAN'T USE MY OWN EYES, NEITHER CAN YOU!!!
BUT THEN.....

I AM TRAINED IN SILENT KILLING. MY GENIUS LIES IN THE ABILITY TO HUNT BY SOUND ALONE!



READ THIS WAY
NO!!
!
SHA
!!
HUNH?!
TAK
POK

BAM!!
AIEEEEE!!
TOO LATE!!


THAT'S SAKURA'S VOICE!! WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
WHAT THE HELL DOES KAKASHI THINK HE'S DOING?!!

!!
HUFF

KRUNCH
MY EYES, ARE BEGINNING TO ADJUST TO THE ENVIRONMENT...

HUFF
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
IF THIS KEEPS UP, WE'LL ALL BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE!-
PUFF

AND WHILE HE'S DIVIDING HIS OWN FOCUS BETWEEN FIGHTING ME AND WATCHING OUT FOR HIS FRIEND... HE'S GRADUALLY GAINING SPEED, BEGINNING TO CATCH UP TO MY OWN MOVES...
I'VE BEEN TARGETING THE POINTS THAT WOULD RESULT IN MORTAL INJURIES BUT... HE'S EVADED EVERY ATTEMPT!

HE CAN SEE SOME-THING...!!
THAT KID...

REAL NARUTO

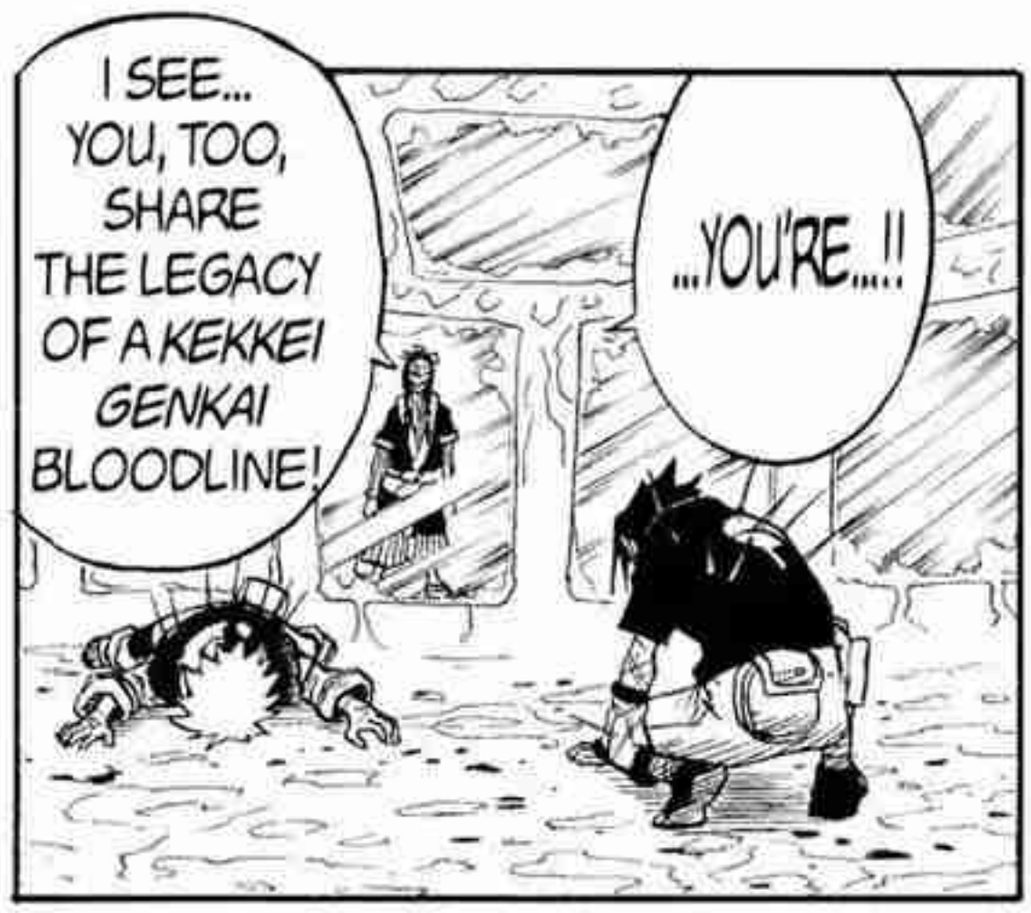
Number 27: Awakenings

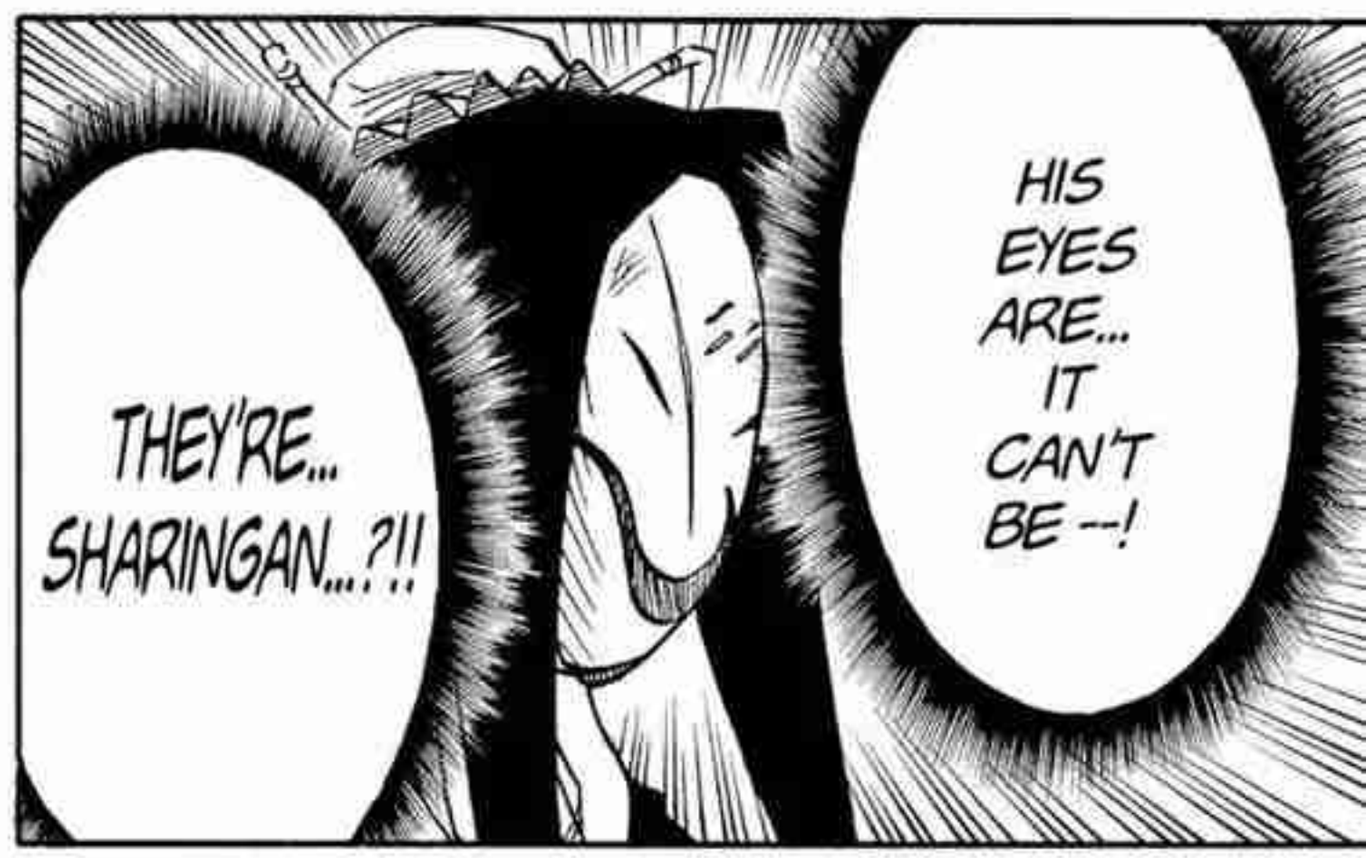
...MOVE WELL...

YOU...

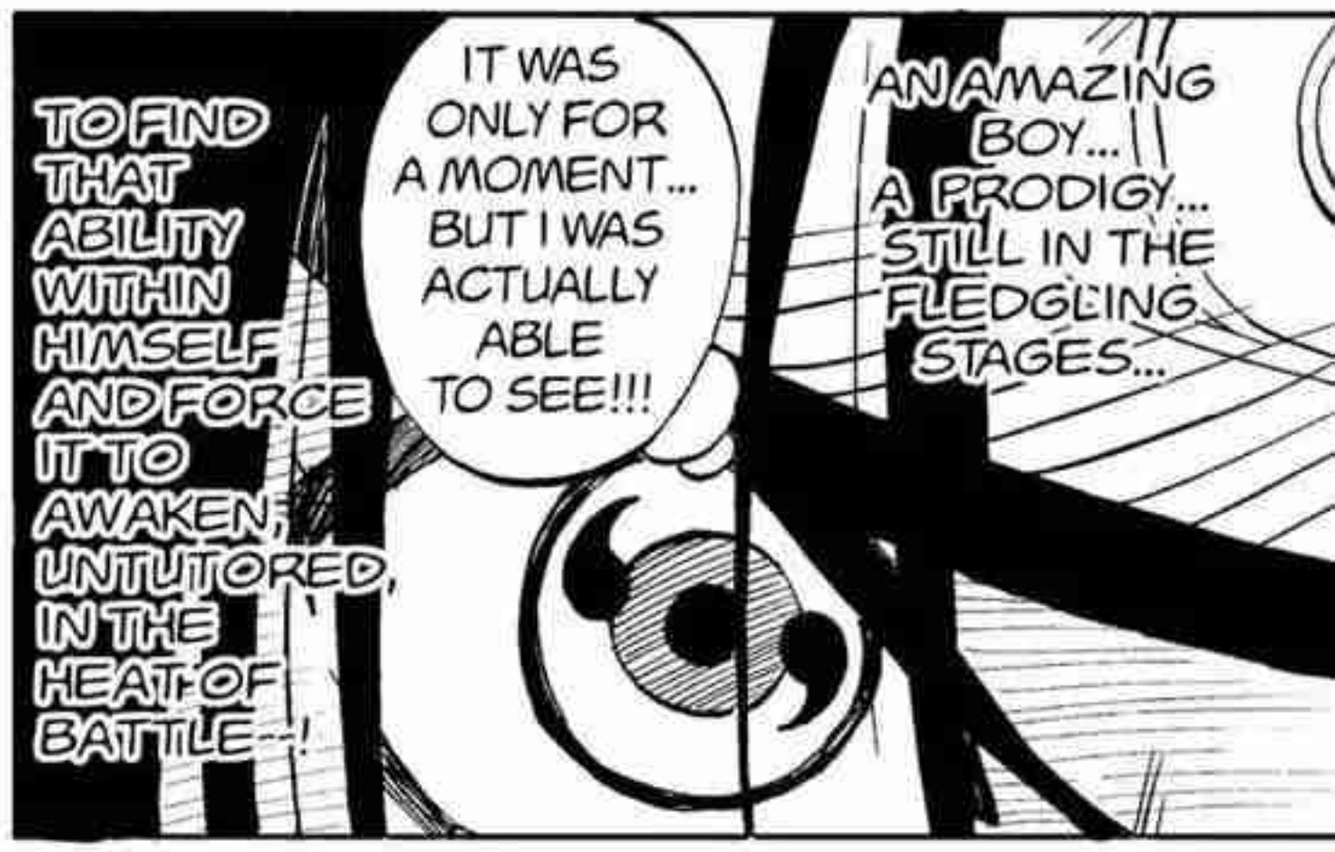
WOOSH
!!
!
!
IMPOSSIBLE...!!
HE WASN'T FOOLED... OR EVEN CONFUSED!
!!
!
GLLLLO

GRR


I SEE... YOU, TOO, SHARE THE LEGACY OF A KEKKEI GENKAI BLOODLINE!
...YOU'RE...!!


THEY'RE... SHARINGAN...?!!
HIS EYES ARE... IT CAN'T BE --!

MY OWN ART FORCES ME TO EXPEND A GREAT DEAL OF CHAKRA, SO THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW LONG I CAN GO ON USING IT!
I CAN'T LET THIS FIGHT GO ON!


TO FIND THAT ABILITY WITHIN HIMSELF AND FORCE IT TO AWAKEN, UNTUTORED, IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE--!
IT WAS ONLY FOR A MOMENT... BUT I WAS ACTUALLY ABLE TO SEE!!!
AN AMAZING BOY... A PRODIGY... STILL IN THE FLEDGLING STAGES...

CHUFF
...BUT IF I USE THE OTHER BOY AS BAIT.....
ESPECIALLY SINCE, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, YOU CAN ALREADY SEE ME NOW!!
IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY TO TRY TO TARGET YOU DIRECTLY...
!
AND I'M CERTAIN THAT THE LONGER OUR DUEL DRAGS ON...
THE GREATER YOUR ABILITY TO PERCEIVE MY MOVE-MENTS WILL BECOME!
TIME TO BRING THIS TO AN END!!
NO! I HAVE TO GET THERE FIRST!!
WHAT?! HE'S GOING AFTER NARUTO?!
!!

DRIPY DRIP

SWING

MASTER KAKASHI!!
!!

YOUR DESIRE TO SAVE THOSE BRATS CAUSED THE BLOOD TO RISE TO YOUR HEAD, OBSCURING YOUR THOUGHTS AND VISION AS SURELY AS THE FOG I'VE CREATED DOES!
YOU WERE SLOW ON YOUR GUARD, KAKASHI!!

UHNN...

YOUR ABILITY TO READ MY MOVEMENTS HAS BEEN BLUNTED!

...EVEN WITH YOUR IMPRESSIVE EYE AND THE FORMIDABLE POWERS YOU WIELD WITH IT...

DON'T WORRY, HAKU SHOULD BE FINISHING OFF THOSE BRATS OF YOURS RIGHT ABOUT NOW...

KLA

PAYING BACK WHAT YOU DID TO ME WOULD GIVE ME THE GREATEST PLEASURE!!

HEH HEH HEH... I WANT TO ENJOY THIS, KAKASHI!

...

HEH HEH HEH... HA HA HA HA HA HAA!!

...

WHEN YOU MEET THEM IN THE AFTER-LIFE, BEG THEM TO FORGIVE YOU FOR YOUR WEAKNESS AND FOLLY!

I'LL BE REUNITING YOU WITH THEM SHORTLY.

YEAH!

YEAH!

YEAH!

YEAH!

YEAH!

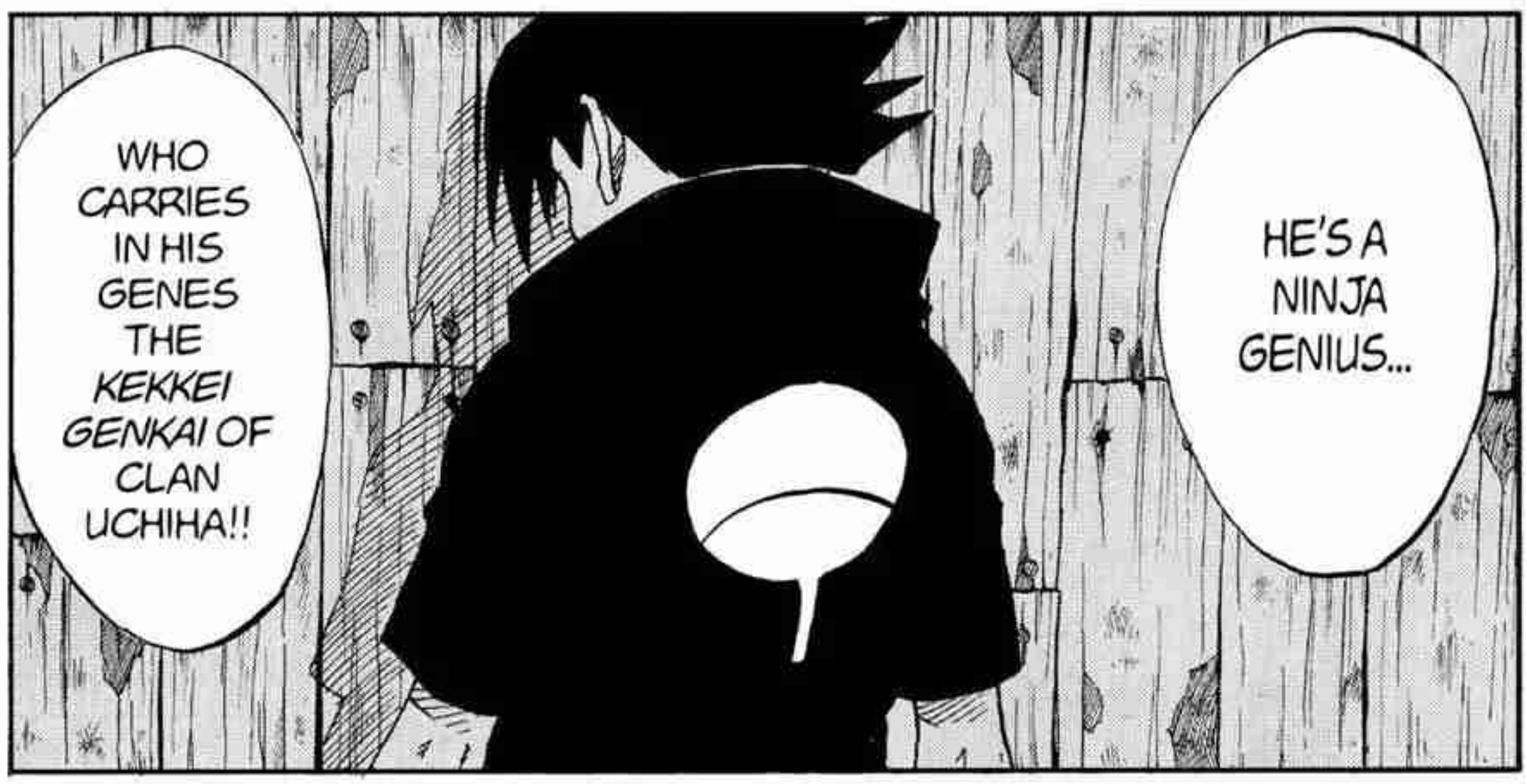
INNER SAKURA

NEITHER WILL NARUTO!!

SASUKE WON'T BE EASY FOR SOMEONE LIKE THAT MASKED KID TO DEFEAT!

THAT'S RIGHT...
HIS FULL NAME IS UCHIHA SASUKE.

...!
YOU DON'T MEAN--


WHO CARRIES IN HIS GENES THE KEKKEI GENKAI OF CLAN UCHIHA!!
HE'S A NINJA GENIUS...

NO ONE...
NO ONE HAS EVER PENETRATED THE SECRET OF HAKU'S TECHNIQUES... UNTIL NOW...
SO HE MAY INDEED BE HAKU'S EQUAL...
SHHHH

FWUS

NO WONDER HIS DEVELOP-MENT IS SO REMARK-ABLE...
HE'S THE SOLE SURVIVING MEMBER OF THAT TRAGIC CLAN, EH...

I'LL FINISH THIS AS QUICKLY AS I CAN!

SAKURA, DON'T MOVE AN INCH.

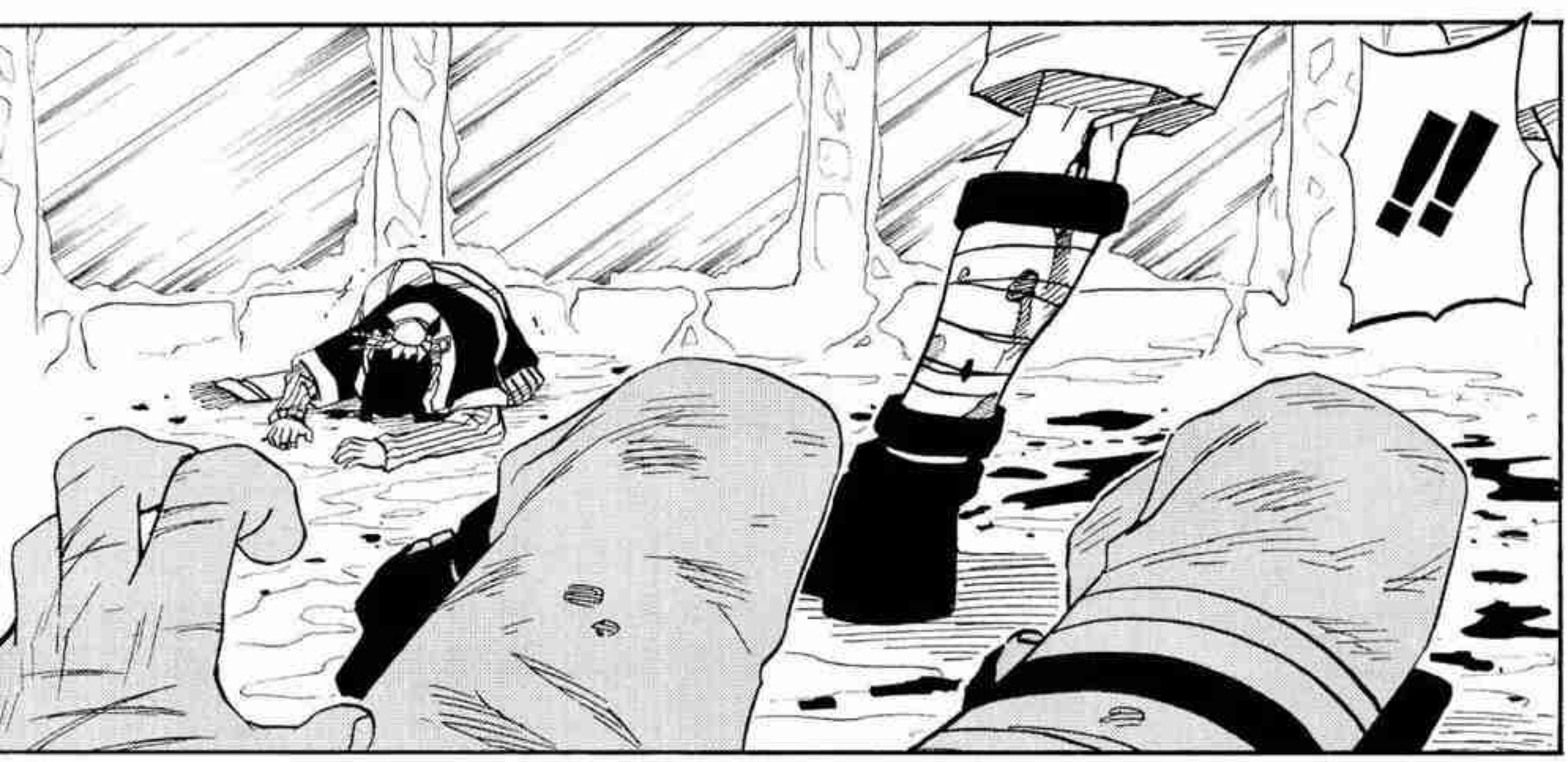
HE'S GONE AGAIN!!

SHAR

DID YOU HEAR THAT, ZABUZA?

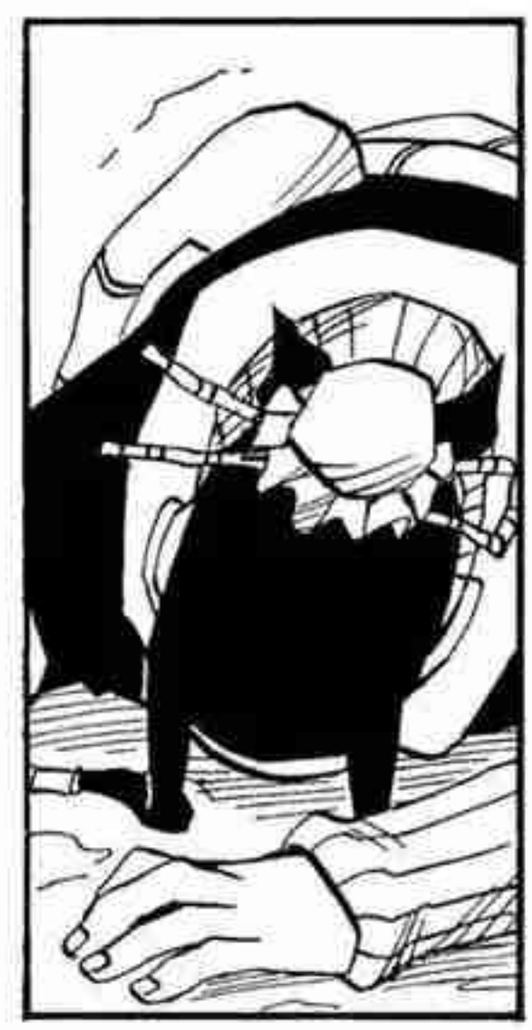
DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE, AFTER ALL OF THE HARDSHIPS, I'VE SURVIVED IN THIS WORLD ARMED ONLY WITH THE SHARINGAN?

UN...
H...
TWITCH


!!

SASUKE! YOU...
!

SHEESH... NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I WARN YOU, NARUTO, YOU STILL KEEP GETTING IN MY WAY...



...YOU SCREW-UP!
NOW GET THAT LAME EXPRESSION OFF YOUR STUPID FACE...
...
WH-WHY...
HE WAS TRYING TO COVER ME...?!

SMOOG GLARE~~~!!

HERE

YOU-HUD!

TRY TO KEEP THAT IN MIND... DUNCE.

AWW...!

ASK ME WHY?

WHY...

...BE A BETTER 5th HOKAGE!!

WHAT?

THAT, AND LONELY.

BEING SCOLDED BY YOUR FOLKS DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE!

KLUF

I USED TO **HATE** YOU, YOU KNOW...

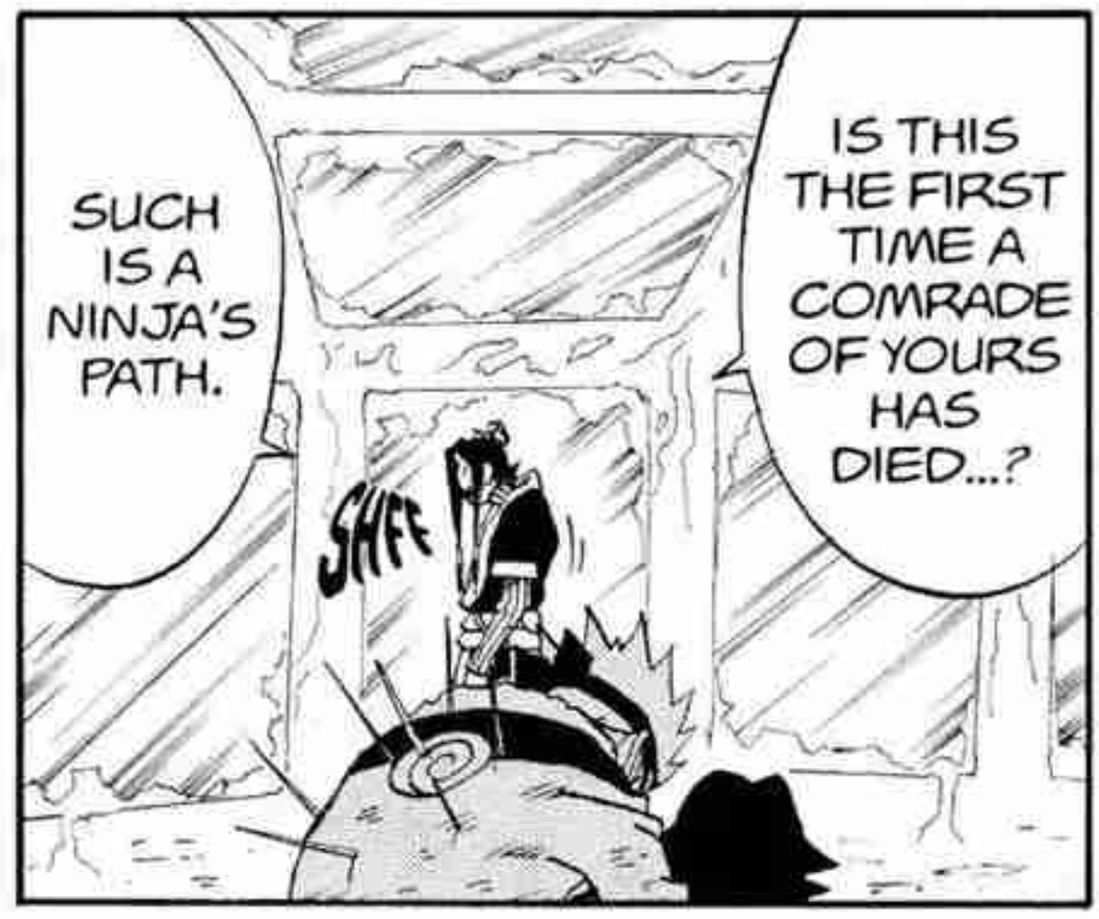
...

HMPH...

READ THIS WAY
YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST MINDED YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!
DRIP
WHY... WHY DID YOU...?!
ME...?
MY BODY JUST... MOVED... ON ITS OWN... FOOL...!
...HOW SHOULD I KNOW...?
GAK
WHUD!
!
SFF

READ THIS WAY
!
...BUT DON'T YOU DARE DIE...
...UNTIL I KILLED HIM... MY OLDER BROTHER... THOUGHT THE OATH WOULD SAVE ME...BUT...
I SWORE I WOULDN'T DIE...
HE WAS A SHINOBI WORTHY OF THE UTMOST RESPECT...
...WHO IN ORDER TO PROTECT SOMEONE HE CARED ABOUT, THREW HIMSELF HEADLONG INTO WHAT HE KNEW FULL WELL WAS A TRAP.
SHIFF
HE STRUCK ONE BLOW AT ME... AND WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF SHIRKING...
... SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR YOU!!
PPPPP

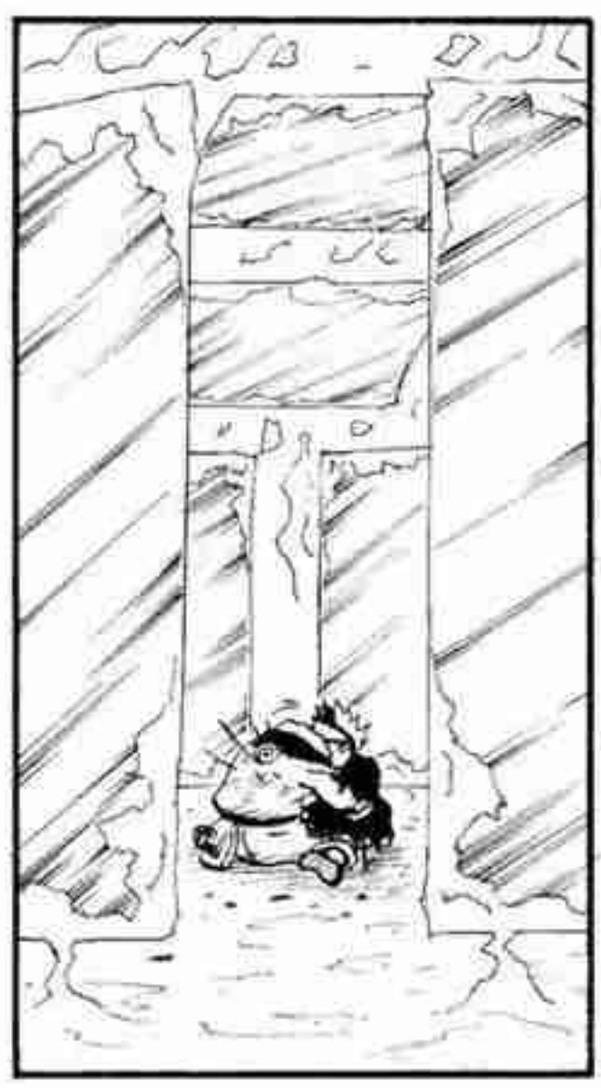
SHFFFFF


SUCH IS A NINJA'S PATH.
IS THIS THE FIRST TIME A COMRADE OF YOURS HAS DIED...?
SHFF

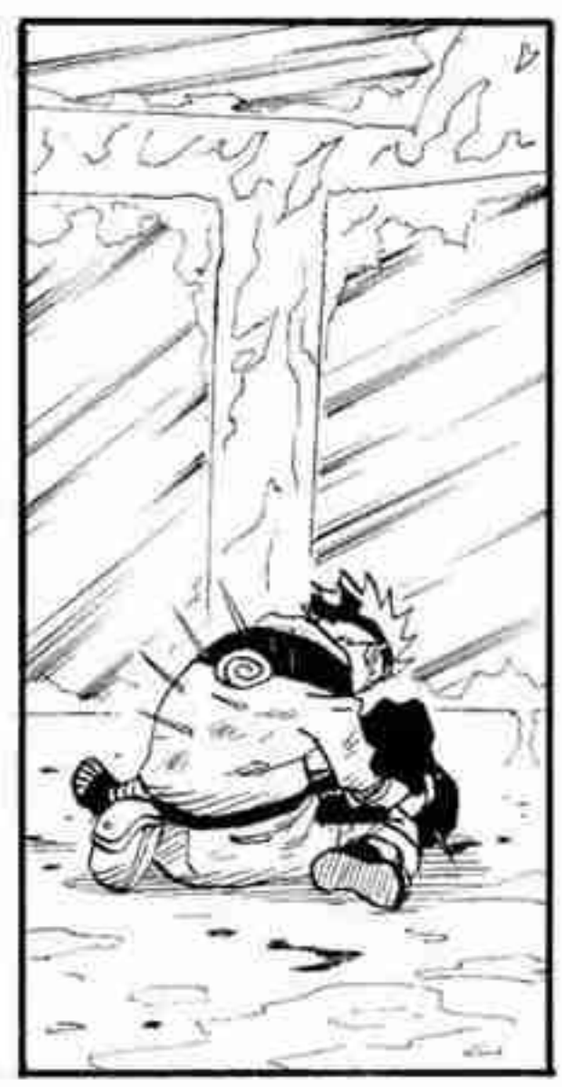
I USED TO HATE YOU, YOU KNOW...

SHUT UP...
...

!



I'M NEVER GONNA FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS...



DNMNO

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!!!
!!
TO BE CONTINUED IN NARUTO VOL.4!